

DIVA

OCTOBER 2015 UK

HOW TO COME OUT
AT ANY AGE

EXCLUSIVE

Hannah Hart

THE SECRET
SIDE OF YOUTUBE'S
MY DRUNK
KITCHEN STAR



Why white LGBTs
need to wise up
to community racism

**GAY MARRIAGE
COMEDOWN**

What next for America's
LGBT community

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STOP TEASING US
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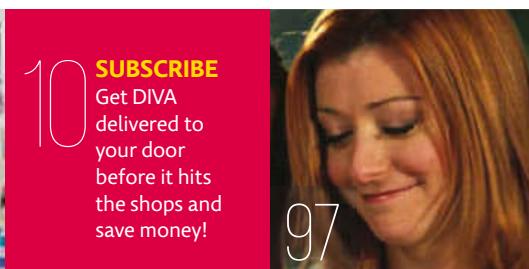
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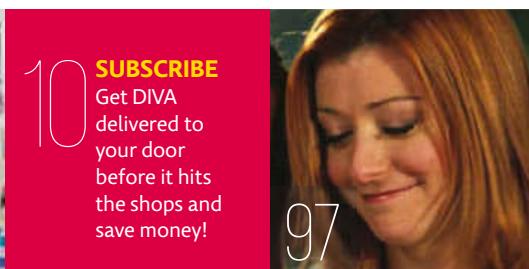
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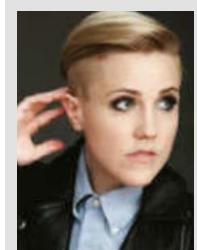
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Kharen Hill
KharenHill.com

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EDITOR'S LETTER



Our cover star, **Hannah Hart**, has over two million fans who log into her quirky YouTube cookery show and it's not hard to see why. Funny, talented, stylishly androgynous (and let's face it, it's still rare to see a show fronted by a boyish girl) and big on smarts, Hannah is our kind of woman. In her interview with DIVA she also shows us other sides to the goofball host who counts Jamie Oliver as a fan (p66). While we're fangirling, it seems a good time to mention actress **Sophie Ward** (p38) who talked to me about her part in the stage adaptation of Aldous Huxley's dystopian novel *Brave New World*. Elsewhere in this issue, we address **racism in our LGBT communities** (p44) and what we can all do to challenge and eradicate it. Our communities have a proud history of pulling together to support each other, whether that was lesbians and bi women supporting gay men during the AIDS crisis or gay and bi women challenging inequality in respect of class or disability, and we have a duty to work alongside queer people of colour who experience overt and covert racism daily. As we approach **National Coming Out Day on 12 October**, we present tips on how and when to let people know (p50) and, finally, our wedding feature is chock full of suggestions for **wedding and honeymoon venues and destinations** (p60), so whether you or someone you know is planning for their big day, we hope you'll find it useful. By the way, if you're finding it hard to get your hands on a copy of DIVA every month, I suggest buying an annual subscription either in print (£36) or digital (£24.99) to save yourself a disappointing trip to the shops.

NEXT MONTH



NOVEMBER ISSUE

on sale 22 October

Revenge porn: what is it and why do we do it?

Jeanette Winterson speaks to DIVA about her new book *The Gap Of Time*

Homotopia: the pick of lesbian, bi and trans offerings at Liverpool's art festival

Dispelling the myths about trans women and lesbian sex

Suffragette sex: the secret private lives of the Victorian feminist activists

What's in a name? Kesiena Boom wants you to call her a lesbian

NEW: Brighton DJ Queen Josephine celebrates the UK's scene queens

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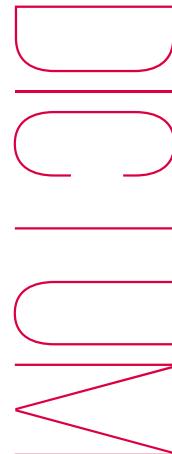
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DETAILS

DIVA



What's the way to your h(e)art?

Editor Jane Czyzelska

"Wit, grit and marzipan; in that order"

Deputy editor Louise Carolin

"The way to my heart is a bridlepath"

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"Kindness"

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"Sincerity"

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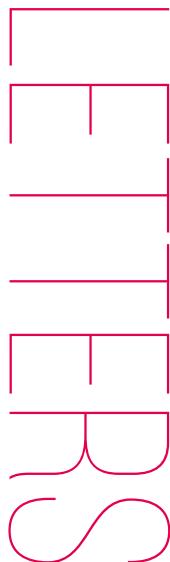
Star Letter

I MADE A SCENE

I created my own social group because I couldn't find where all the lesbians were, as I'm not into doing football/rugby/sports or being drunk on the men's gay scene. Now we have almost 600 women in Lesbian Socials in Leeds, and a bar where a lot of lesbians go and it isn't a lesbian bar per se! Great times. We recently celebrated the fourth birthday of our social group.

Find us online at facebook.com/SocialsInLeeds.

CATHIE ROSE HEART via facebook.com/divamagazine



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letters@divamag.co.uk

or use the old-fashioned method and drop us a line at

DIVA MAGAZINE

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LET'S B INCLUSIVE

As a long-time reader of DIVA, I just wanted to say "thank you" for doing such a great job in your recent coverage of the "B" part of the deal. In the past I've sometimes felt a little like an interloper, but this last year or so your regular and genuine inclusion of "us" has been very much appreciated. Please keep it up!

BETHAN, Hong Kong

GET IN A SWET

We're hosting LGBTQ+ events at our cosy and intimate spa in north London and would love to hear from DIVA readers who are interested in organising a meet-up. For more info go to swet.club.

JAS

BI THE WAY, MUM...

My mum and I discussed together the Secret Bisexuals feature (September) and how identifying as bi is difficult in a heteronormative world. I shared tales of people assuming aspects of my sexuality; things like, "Oh, you've been with men and women? That's a bit greedy," or "Are you sure you're just not gay? How gay are you?". These attitudes do set us back, which is why it's so important to hold our heads up high and say, "Sexual orientation does not define how many people I've slept with" and "I'm not gay, I'm 100% bisexual". These discussions have brought us closer, with some laughs along the way. Thanks, DIVA.

DANIELLE, Cardiff

OBITUARY: LISA ALABAKSH REMEMBERS DENISE MARSHALL

The day I met Denise Marshall, in January 1992, I was still identifying as straight. I was in full make-up, kitten heels and painted nails. We bumped into each other in the canteen of Middlesex University and began to chat. It was a discussion that was to last 23 years, and only ended when she tragically died, aged 53, of stomach cancer on 21 August 2015. Denise, utterly gorgeous with her fierce, green eyes, was resplendent in a red duffle coat, on top of a glamorous, low-cut dress. I immediately developed a crush on her. Speaking of a fellow student, I said to Denise, "He's the sort of bloke who thinks you're a lesbian if you disagree with him". She replied, "I am a lesbian, so I don't know what he'd think of me." I thought, "That's funny, she doesn't look like Paul (a butch lesbian who was the only other dyke I know), so how can she be?" Denise was an out and proud lesbian since the early 1980s, when she met another sister, Femi Otitolu, who was also working in sales at the Islington Gazette. Soon, Denise was trailblazing the campaign to end violence against women, and also, for the liberation of young lesbians. Her first job in the charitable sector was at Stonewall Housing, but she then chose feminism as her way forward. In 2007, as CEO of the charity Eaves, she was awarded an OBE for her work. She handed it back four years later to protest at government cuts to essential women's services. One of Denise's particular bugbears was the celebrity lesbians who chose to be in the closet, despite the fact that they would have found it far easier than the majority of women who were particularly vulnerable to abuse, violence and social exclusion for speaking out. Denise gave most of her adult life to challenging male violence towards women and girls. Her legacy has to be the continuation of this fight.

DENISE MARSHALL, 12 DECEMBER 1961 - 21 AUGUST 2015

Opinions expressed by correspondents and contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors of DIVA magazine or its publishers.



WIN!

STAR LETTER PRIZE

The winner of this month's star letter will be looking fly with one of these Timex watches on their wrist. You won't be able to resist throwing yourself back to the 80s with one of these retro beauties, featuring a bold pop of colour and a vintage look. Timex's latest range is chic yet durable and comes with either a gold or silver stainless steel strap. Get your own at timex.co.uk.



You asked and DIVA delivered: Heather Peace is one of your most-requested cover stars



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It looks rather suspicious that pages of my @DIVAmagazine are stuck together... I swear it's donut glaze!!

@Jadelou_xxx

Great interview with @heatherpeace in @DIVAmagazine with some lovely photos

@ClaireShrugged

Old white man on the train gave me major side-eye when I opened @DIVAmagazine. That + brilliant content means I'm definitely subscribing.

@KellisCampbell

Diva, not only are u a bad ass magazine, ur support for the LBGT community is astounding.

@georgy_gill

Absolutely loved reading the article in @DIVAmagazine this month by Nicola Field @LGSMpride 'The Politics of Pride' - solidarity forever !

Pleased to meet you!



Every issue, we invite one of our readers to tell us about her relationship with DIVA.



NAME & AGE:

KARINE YUKI, 28

FROM:

TOKYO, JAPAN

OCCUPATION:

NPO WORKER (WE SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF IPV AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE)

IDENTITY:

FAITHFUL TRY-SEXUAL

WHAT MADE YOU START READING DIVA?

I found DIVA by chance when I was desperate for ANY info on women like me. It was like TGIE (Thank god I can read English)!

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A READER?

About two years.

PRINT OR DIGITAL?

Print! I love to read in the bathroom.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT DIVA?

I like its balance. There are always different perspectives on one topic, and there are always femme and butch represented.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF?

Even more body positive and sex positive articles that empower survivors.

HOW MANY PEOPLE READ YOUR COPY?

Only me. But I translate interesting articles into Japanese for my girlfriend sometimes.

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR COPY WHEN YOU'VE READ IT?

Stock for a year, cut the favorite articles and say goodbye to the rest of the magazine.

WHO WOULD YOU PUT ON THE COVER AND WHY?

Me? Or Heather Peace! She was my first "love at first sight" since I realised I loved girls.

(ED: We hope you enjoyed the last issue then, Karine!)

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Not dead yet



A few weeks ago, I realised I had been caught up in a perverse personal experiment. Whenever my parents rang

me, I'd watch the phone for a moment, then invent a reason as to why they might be calling. The reasons I invented were usually bad: something earth-shattering had happened in the neighbourhood, one of our relatives had just done something unthinkable. A more banal one was that one of my grandparents, on my dad's side, had died. Don't worry, it's not as morbid as it sounds. They are both on their way out, have been for a while now, everyone is expecting it. Suddenly they couldn't take the bus alone; then they were less able to work the cooker; then to walk. And since then, I have studiously avoided visiting either of them more than I have to.

I have touched on the reasons for this in previous columns: I am not especially close to my family – looking like a boy and spending an inordinate amount of time with a mysterious Australian woman doesn't help – but being historically aware, I can't ignore the life my grandparents endured in order to give me the life I have today. It's just a shame that after all that, we have so little to say to each other.

So I suppose the experiment has been to prepare myself so that I am completely aware – almost premonitorily so – of the exact circumstances of their deaths, because I have never been particularly involved in the circumstances of their lives.

I'm probably prodding at some old wound in order to spark the feelings I never had. Maybe this is just cowardice. Maybe, secretly, they're afraid of *me*. Maybe I'm the one who isn't being visited. Maybe they're actually just fine and pretending to die so they don't have to speak to *me*. Maybe I am overthinking it. Or not thinking about it enough. Either way, when I do eventually answer the phone, I am always full of mixed feelings: extremely relieved that nothing has *happened* and extremely burdened by the fact that they didn't have weightier news. I just want something to happen so the stalemate can end. A flood. A kidnapping. Anything so that I am not always walking around feeling things for people that I am related to, but who don't understand me, who actively dislike huge parts of *me*.

Which, naturally, gets me thinking about current efforts to make us all live longer. I find it hard to imagine myself at 90 experiencing the grim reaper the same way my grandparents do now. I find it hard to imagine myself, as someone who has spent two thirds

JAY BERNARD
ANTICIPATES
THE CALL
THAT WILL
TELL HER OF
THE DEATH OF
HER GRAND-
PARENTS

of her life in front of the interwebs, sliding down the mortal coil in the same way people did before artificial light or modern medicine. No doubt it will come. But am I, as a member of a generation who expects to start having kids at 40, deluding myself and thus ruining my chances of a decent death? And am I ruining other people's?

A few months ago, I was in New York and a very sweet cartoonist named Elvis B read from a zine about their nearly 100-year-old grandma. I bought it, got it signed, and we had a chat later. The entire time, I felt a kind of weird resentment and suspicion mixed in with all the gooey admiration. Like I wanted that too. Like I wished I could be the kind of grandchild that was present and caring and felt loved in return.

One of the things that often comes up when I talk to older queer people is what will happen when they get old. I have made a few promises that I will be there to cook and clean and finally hold the hands of all the people that have helped me along the way. Maybe that will make up for this strange rift. There have been many conversations about the kind of nursing homes people will end up in, but I prefer to imagine what kind of ghost they'll make. As I am discovering, it is possible to be haunted by people long before they leave you. ☙

**It is a
shame that
my grand-
parents
and I have
so little to
say to each
other**

Making happy families

We met in Brighton in 2006 and from the very beginning of our relationship we knew that we wanted to create a family together. We celebrated our civil partnership with close friends and family in 2011 and soon after we began trying to make our dreams of having a baby a reality. After much research and disappointment, we moved to Kent and contacted CARE Fertility in Tunbridge Wells.

In November 2012 we had an initial consultation with Mr Rimington and made a treatment plan. We were encouraged and excited and set about saving every spare penny we could. We chose a donor with similar attributes to Faye, tall, dark hair and green eyes. We had our first treatment cycle in June 2013 and eagerly and excitedly awaited our test result. Unfortunately the cycle was unsuccessful and we were devastated. We began to think maybe our dream would never be realised.



Kerry and Faye with daughter Scarlett

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With the support and encouragement of the staff at CARE we had a second cycle of IUI treatment in November 2013 using the same donor. This time we were much more nervous during the 3 week wait. When we took the test and got a positive result we were over the moon. We hardly dared to believe it was real until we had our confirmation scan 4 weeks later. Seeing the tiny heartbeat on screen was the most incredible moment of our lives.

Faye delivered our beautiful daughter Scarlett naturally following a normal pregnancy in August 2014. She is truly the love of our lives and amazes us every day as we watch her grow into a funny, bright and loving little girl who we prepare to celebrate turning 1 in a few weeks.

In the future we would love to expand our family and will not think twice about using CARE Fertility. The staff were extraordinarily warm and understanding and really do make dreams come true.

Kerry and Faye



Suffragette: a vivid and moving tale – but where are the queer women?

The truth will out

TWO NEW FILMS ERASE THE TRUTH ABOUT LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL LIVES, SAYS JANE CZYZSELSKA



During an interview with the Independent, journalist Danuta Kean asks the author Sarah Waters why she

thinks women claim a sort of ownership of her. Kean says that Waters' readers – gay and straight – feel the lesbian novelist is "the women's writer, chronicler of our lives, passions and struggles". Waters thinks it may be her attention "to women's secret history and lives, acknowledging meaning in their domestic lives," that inspires her devoted female fans.

I wonder if the same could be said of writer Abi Morgan and film director Sarah Gavron who in the movie Suffragette have created a vivid and moving tale of the working class suffragettes who fought for the right to vote, for equal pay and treatment in law, because they had nothing left to lose.

The history buff who came with me to a press screening of the film is currently researching the period (the film is set in 1912, when the home secretary was finally forced to listen and respond to the women's demands) and was impressed. As the credits rolled, she said the factory and domestic scenes brought to life the poverty she'd been reading about in history books. As a celluloid record of working class women its importance cannot be

Leaving lesbians and bi women out tells us that the truth of who they were is not worth remembering

underestimated. As a record of non-heterosexual women who took part in the movement it falls short. Where Waters pays attention to the secret histories and lives of women – all women – Gavron misses an opportunity to give us the full picture.

In 2000, the Guardian reported that entries in the diary of a suffragette revealed that key members of the Votes For Women movement led a promiscuous lesbian lifestyle. The diaries name two women – Emmeline Pankhurst and Emily Wilding Davison – who were known to have had lesbian relationships. Both are key members of the suffrage movement, both have important supporting roles in the film yet their sexuality is assumed to be heterosexual because nothing is hinted to the contrary.

It is an omission that once again erases bisexual and lesbian women from history and this tells us that the truth of who they were is not worth remembering; that their lives are still not valued. In Suffragette the heterosexual minutiae of women's lives are depicted in gruesome detail. Women who loved women were affected as much as those who loved men were because they were denied the vote or equal pay. Their sexuality was no defence against rape – far from it – yet their stories are sacrificed at the altar of heteronormativity.

It would be less galling if this omis-

sion was the exception but Suffragette is one of a number of films in which lesbian and bisexual truths are either forgotten or consciously erased.

Roland Emmerich's Stonewall tells the story of the struggle for rights fought by lesbian, bi, gay and trans men and women at the now infamous New York bar. Like the working class suffragettes, the Stonewall Inn's black gay, bi, lesbian and trans clientele were no strangers to daily police harassment because of their race, and they too fought back because they had nothing left to lose.

As DIVA goes to press, only a trailer for the film has been released, so we don't know for sure but interviews with supporting cast seem to confirm that black lesbian Stormé DeLarverie and black trans woman Marsha P Johnson – key protagonists at Stonewall – are sidelined in favour of a story about a fictional white gay man. A similar fate befell the lesbian and bi women in Pride, the movie about the gay activists who supported the British miners during the great 1980s strike.

These films are crucial because many outside and within the LGBT community don't know about the events at the Stonewall Inn or elsewhere in history and it is important that we learn about our past and teach those who don't know. If our primary learning tool is film – one of the most powerful communicators of our time – and the film shows a partial version of the truth, black lesbians, bi and trans people will be forgotten. This creates the impression that only white people, and usually white men, are history-makers. It reinforces the lie that only white people's lives should be remembered.

So what to do? Enjoy the movies if you can but don't treat them as a reliable source. There are many more truths to be discovered. Go use that other tool, the internet; and in the spirit of Sarah Waters, discover the details and spread the word. ☺

Suffragette is reviewed on p35. For more about queer women in the suffrage movement, don't miss next month's issue of DIVA.

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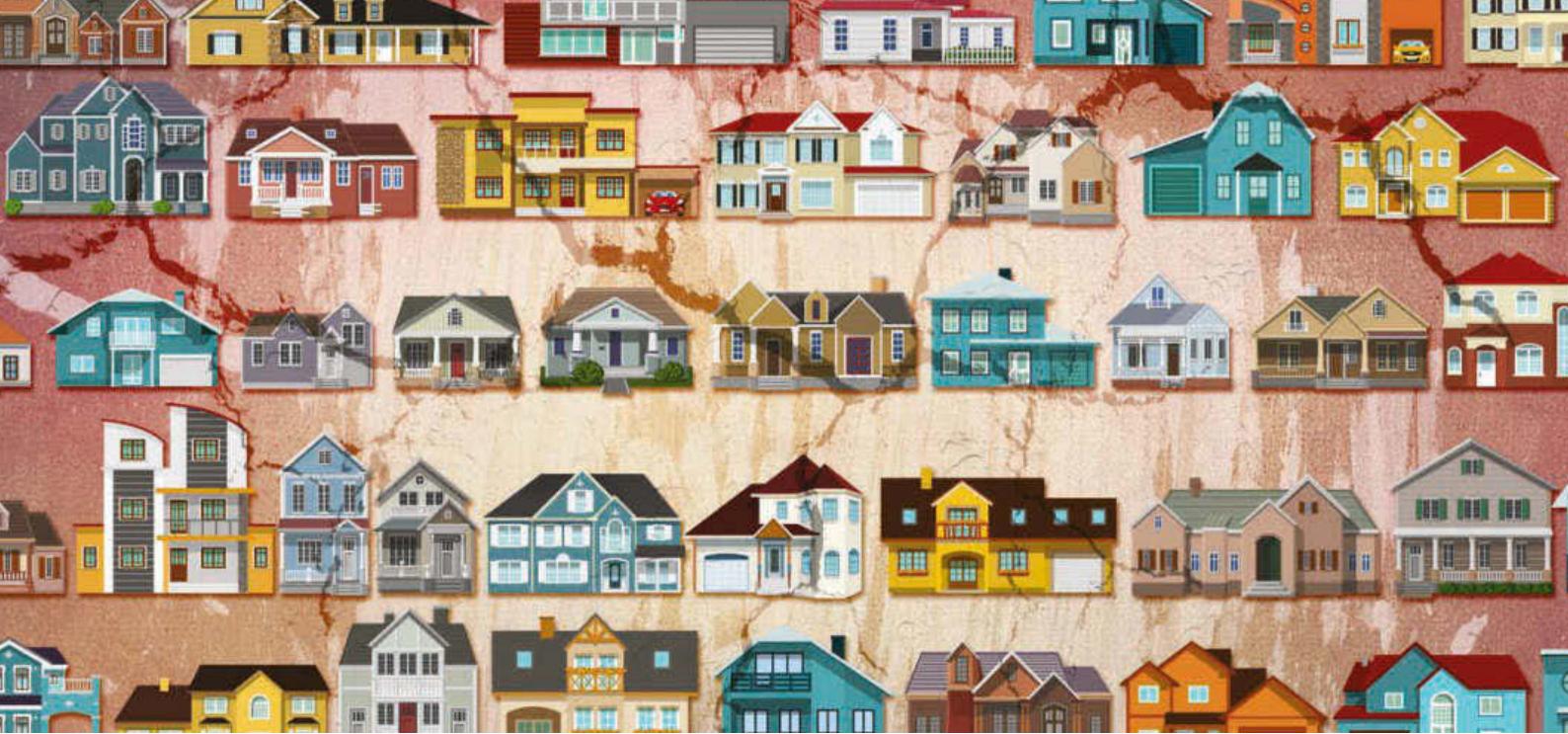
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Safe as houses?

THE HOUSING CRISIS AFFECTS LESBIAN, BI AND TRANS PEOPLE, SAYS CHARLOTTE COOPER



Having a cheap and secure home means that it is easier for me to make choices about my life

On the mornings I don't feel anxious when I wake up, I look out of the window and admire the sycamore at the back of my garden and thank my lucky stars that I have a place of my own and a bloody big tree to love. It is luck that has brought me here. Unbelievable luck that the landlord sold up cheaply and offered the place to us. Luck that after being on benefits for most of my adulthood I was able to have work coming in and could get a mortgage. Luck that my love's distant uncle died and left us a couple of grand when that's what a deposit on a place cost. Luck that I am old enough to remember when housing didn't eat up so much money.

I live in a row of old buildings that are gradually being bought up by slumlords, something you don't hear much about within the regeneration rhetoric continuously flaunted around here. Yesterday I amused myself by reading Tripadvisor reviews by unsuspecting tourists staying at the flophouse next door. My ceiling leaks because the upstairs landlord doesn't like to spend money on plumbers even though he's probably clearing at least two thousand a month from the property. He's got his eye on my place too. I don't live anywhere fancy but having a

cheap and secure home means that it is easier for me to make choices about my life around money and work, how I feel about the future, my sense of being safe.

There is a wave of homelessness and housing precarity rising in my social networks and presumably beyond. I am noticing it in conversations and in my social media feeds. It is lesbian, bi and trans people who are struggling to find places to live, especially people of colour and those who are young. It's not necessarily about destitution either, people with low paid and insecure jobs are also facing housing difficulties.

For example, there is a whole world of subletting that has become normalised and is invisible to people who enjoy housing security. If you are ever away from your room, maybe you've managed to scrape together a holiday, you sublet because your space is too valuable to lie fallow. If you need to put money aside, you sublet and couch-surf because rent eats up so much of your income. Couch-surfing can mean sleeping rough when your friends can no longer help you out, or sleeping in secret at work. You blame yourself when things don't work out, but the housing crisis is not your fault.

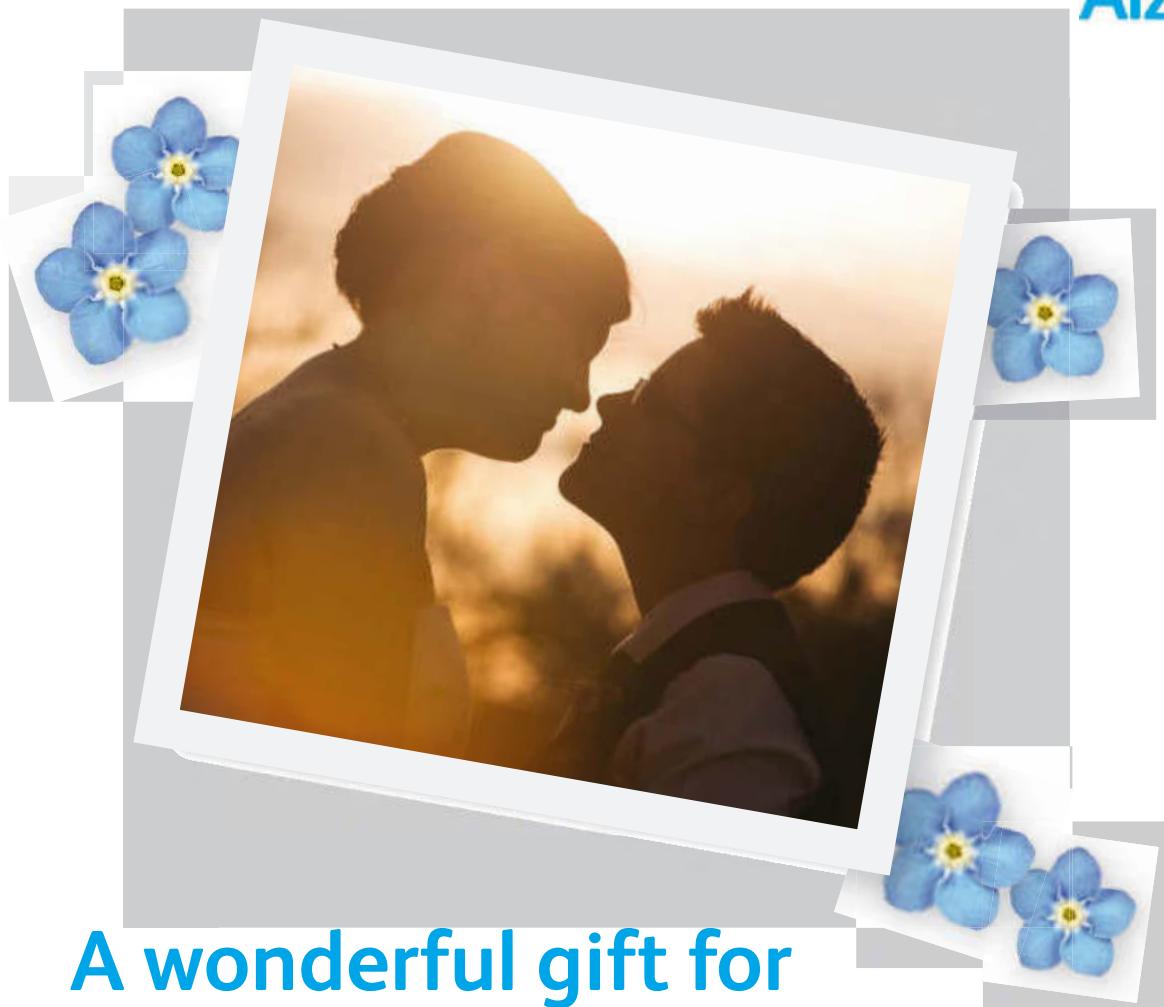
The lucky ones return to their parents in places they originally struggled to escape from. Other people live in extremely temporary and insecure

situations. Now that squatting has been criminalised they pay rent where previously they might have lived for free. I've known three groups of people who lived in flats that were about to be demolished, allowing the owners to squeeze out the last dregs of profit. The places were mouldy and crumbling around their ears, it was hard to stay well and, if you're ill, how can you work?

Meanwhile I have been a witness to other kinds of conversations. A lesbian friend asked my advice about how to evict a tenant who was getting on their nerves. I know queers who have accidentally become rich because of gentrification yet complain about it like utter tossers. A pair of local dykes got into property investment and are very pleased with themselves now that they are landlords because they can afford a better quality of life. Two other queers, people who I thought were real reprobates, have become estate agents and see this as a community service. They found a vocation where their poor grasp of ethics is an asset.

Things have become so greedy, selfish and limited. The unfairness of what I and others have compared to the poverty I am witnessing burns me up. Surely our community can do better than this. 

charlotte@divamag.co.uk



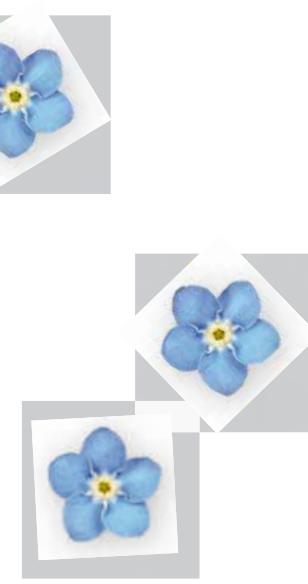
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DIVA MEETS THE BISEXUAL ACTIVIST WHO IS DOCUMENTING THE HISTORIES OF BI PEOPLE OF COLOUR

WORDS LOUISE CAROLIN

Jacq Applebee is one of the many unsung heroes of the LGBT community. Giving a voice to people with intersectional identities, she is a founder member of the Bis Of Colour support group and, as the black and minority ethnic (BME) people's representative on the Pride In London community advisory board this year, she led the challenge to Pride organisers about the participation of UKIP in the march.

Earlier, Jacq had also helped to establish the position of bisexual people's representative on the advisory board, after spotting that bi people were officially unrepresented amongst the organisers of the UK's largest Pride event.

DIVA caught up with her at BiCon 2015 in Nottingham, and asked how Bis Of Colour came to be.

"Bis Of Colour started five years ago at BiCon 2010, in response to the racism and Islamophobia that a lot of our members were experiencing in LGBT spaces, including BiCon. We wanted to create a safer space for people of colour where we wouldn't get ignored or dismissed, where we could just be ourselves and talk about issues that were important to us, that were different to issues that were affecting white bisexual people," she explains.

Working without funding, she has since researched and published the Bis Of Colour History Report, an important first step in documenting the experience of a largely invisible community. Isolation is a huge problem when people might attend an event looking for someone like themselves, only to find they're "the only black face amongst hundreds of people".

In addition, the toxic combination of racism and biphobia is something bis of colour know well, says Jacq. "Racism and biphobia together is something that we often experience within LGBT spaces. People don't seem to take it seriously, as if once someone is LGBT then they don't oppress other people because how can they be like that?"

Bis Of Colour now meets

once a month in London. "Getting people together is tricky. People of colour generally are more likely to have more than one job, and getting to the location might be difficult because of money problems too," says Jacq, but the meet-ups provide invaluable support as well as a relaxing environment where people's whole selves are validated and celebrated.

Jacq is currently fundraising in order to complete the Bis Of Colour History Project, an oral history of bi people of colour in the UK. Ultimately she hopes there may be a book and a touring exhibition in the pipeline. "I'm 46 right now, I've been out for 24 years as a bisexual person, but if I went into any library in the UK to find out about bisexual people of colour there would be nothing," she states. "Until I wrote the Bis of Colour Report, there was no information about that at all in the whole world. It's a really sorry state of affairs and if I can change that just a little bit, that's what I want to do." Ⓛ

To help fund the Bis Of Colour History Project, visit gofundme.com/bochistory.

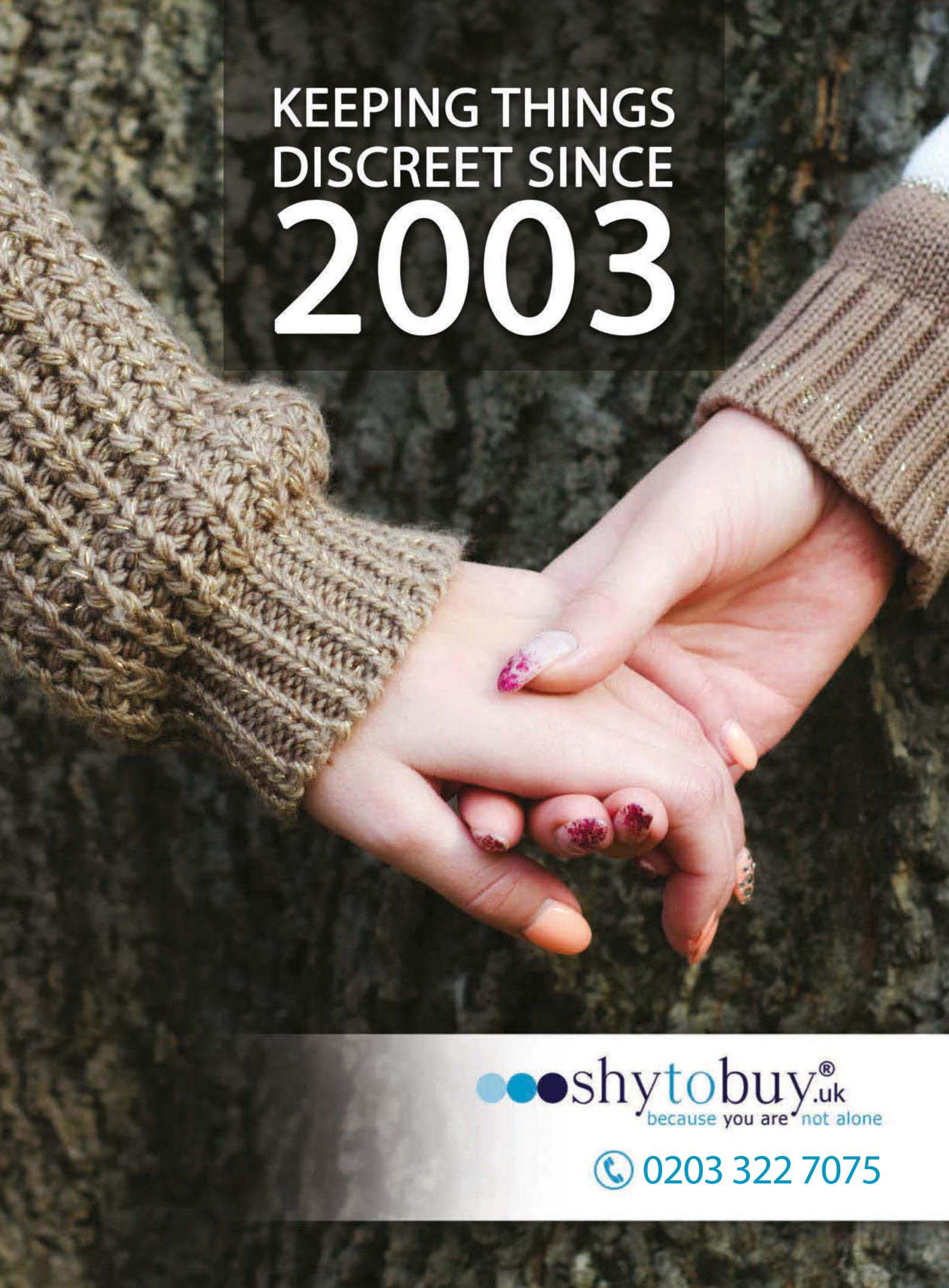
For more about racism in the LGBT community and UKIP's participation at Pride In London, see the article Throwing Shade on Whiteness on p44.

JACQ APPLEBEE



BI PEOPLE OF COLOUR
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Bis of Colour History Report:
tinyurl.com/BOCreport
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To sleep, perchance to dream



I couldn't sleep last night. It's not an uncommon occurrence, to be fair. On average I probably manage about four hours' sleep

a night, a sad statistic that can lead to awkward conversations. Whenever I reveal my nighttime snooze patterns, the first thing most people say is, "Oh! You're like Margaret Thatcher!" Yes. I'm just like Margaret Thatcher. Apart from all of my political beliefs and the fact that my sleep pattern didn't lead to the privatisation of national industries.

This isn't a new state of affairs; insomnia has been a constant in my life from a very young age. Most of my childhood was spent lying in my bunk bed, wrapped in my Strawberry Shortcake duvet cover, staring longingly at my George Michael poster. Of course, being an insomniac in 2015 is far more palatable than it was 30 years ago. Last night I listened to a few podcasts to keep me company in the wee small hours. In the days before technology all I could do was sit and wait for dawn to come, occasionally flicking through teletext for company.

Don't think that I've simply accepted my fate. Name a remedy and I've tried it. Revolting-tasting teas, a notepad by my bed to write down my worries. One

website suggested the best thing to do was get out of bed and do some cleaning. So I did. And had to spend three weeks apologising to my flatmates for hoovering at 2am. I'm so desperate for help that I've gone right outside the box to try to find a cure. A couple of years ago I went to Iceland and consulted an Elf Queen to try to get relief from my insomnia. She gave me a special stone to hold in my hand at night that would surround me with protective spirits who would soothe me to sleep. It didn't work. But I did get to hang out with an Elf Queen, so it's not all bad.

Friends have suggested that I go to the doctor and get sleeping pills but that won't help. The sad reality is that pills won't stop the main reason I can't sleep, namely my restless and ridiculous mind.

For example, last night's thought process went something like this:

- What's that song about being a bitch and lover and a child and a mother?
- Was it Alanis Morissette? I loved Jagged Little Pill
- I should listen to Jagged Little Pill
- Jagged Little Pill makes me think of my first girlfriend
- My first girlfriend left me for someone taller
- Will my wife leave me for someone taller?
- Where would I live if we split up?
- I should probably learn how to

SUSAN CALMAN WISHES SHE COULD JUST GET 40 WINKS. HECK, FOUR WOULD DO

change light bulbs, in case I'm single

- I'd need a big ladder
- We used to play ladders in the Brownies
- Why wasn't I made a sixer in the Brownies?
- I wonder if Gillian Anderson was in the Brownies?
- I've still got my Brownie uniform, should I wear it if I meet Gillian Anderson?
- I fancy Gillian Anderson
- I fancy a biscuit. I fancy a mint Viscount
- How long it would take to read the whole internet?

I often wonder what I would be like if I was fully rested. Maybe I'd be happier. The reality is that I'll never know. I am what I am and I don't see it changing. So I've decided to think positively. To look for a way to use my predicament for the good of others.

I've started to think of myself as a tiny brooding Batman, watching over the world as it sleeps. So if you find yourself awake, at three in the morning, worrying about the world, don't. Just close your eyes and go to sleep. I'll keep watch.

I've got your back tonight. And tomorrow. And the tomorrow after that. ☺

An Elf Queen gave me a special stone to hold. It didn't work

You can now buy the download of Susan Calman's first tour, *Lady Like*, from SusanCalman.com.
susan@divamag.co.uk

“It’s sizzling hot in Bournemouth this autumn!”

Bournemouth is sizzling hot this autumn! This premier holiday hot spot is tempting visitors with a packed and varied programme of events, entertainment and activities taking place in the town. Bournemouth also has the proud boast that it is one of the sunniest places in the UK, all year round.

The thriving coastal town is host to an eclectic mix of events throughout the autumn months, including the Arts by the Sea Festival which is a 10 day extravaganza of music, dance, theatrical performances and visual art displays. The festival which runs from 9th – 18th October will see art everywhere with major installations all over including the town's gardens and even along the beach, with inspired use of light and fire.

Exhibitors will include internationally renowned artists and performers with highlights in this year's programme including an interactive digital firework display, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Water Light Graffiti in which spectators become the artists and create light-up visual displays. In recognition of the 2015 International Year of Light expect a bright and vivid programme in an unparalleled location and some unexpected surprises too!

A huge arts fringe event takes place on

the tail of the Arts by the Sea Festival and this has become a superb platform for emerging artists in the town to showcase themselves, their artistic passion and flair. Over 170 artists, designers and creatives will be performing and acting in over 70 different locations at many very unique pop-up venues around town. The fringe is closely affiliated with the Arts University of Bournemouth (AUB) which provides a multitude of fresh talent from students and graduates alike.

Halloween is another good reason to visit Bournemouth in autumn. Why not come along and enjoy the many celebrations in the coastal village of Boscombe and be spooked by zombies, ghouls and ghosts roaming the streets or discover Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and other fascinating local history.

Bournemouth, which was recently voted the UK's Best Coastal Resort in the British Travel Awards, is encouraging visitors to come and use the town as a base to experience the extensive range of coastal pursuits on offer. Why not try out the World's first Pier to Shore Zip Wire and zip surf 80 feet above the sea down to the beach. Maybe hire bikes to take a leisurely ride along some 7 miles of promenade from Hengistbury Head to

Sandbanks and enjoy the breath taking picture postcard views of the stunning coastline which features the Isle of Wight to one side and the Purbeck hills to the other.

Nestled between the bustling town centre and award winning beach, there's always a reason and a season to take a relaxing walk through Bournemouth's beautiful Grade II listed Victorian Gardens. The Lower, Central and Upper Gardens offer an oasis of colour and are absolutely stunning in the Autumn.

Just across the bay from Bournemouth is Britain's only natural World Heritage site, the Jurassic Coastline, where there are some amazing walks along the cliffs from Old Harry Rocks, through Swanage and along the South West Coastal Path.

Over the years Bournemouth's LGBT community has grown and the town has become a go-to destination with several LGBT venues and numerous gay friendly hotels. Same sex weddings are commonly taking place in the town too as couples discover the romance of the area!

Come and discover Bournemouth this autumn...there really is something for everyone! ☺

bournemouth.co.uk/autumn



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Paws for concern



I'm concerned that my cat may be a little "bunged up". Poor thing hasn't had "a movement" in two days. She hasn't

"been", as my dear old nan would have said. Well, she would have mouthed it to her neighbour over the cat's head, accompanied with an exaggerated, meaningful nod. Oh, hang the euphemisms: my cat is constipated. I know this because I've been on Poop Watch for the last two days like some crazed Chris Packham character. The thing is, she is 15 in December, officially a geriatric, and though she still has a spring in her step, increasingly I feel I want to wrap her in cotton wool.

I'm over-vigilant for signs that her health may be declining. My recent search history betrays me: normal cat poo, is cat constipation dangerous, cat neediness, weird meow, that sort of thing. She, on the other hand, appears fine. She walks breezily into the room, plonks down in front of me and begins cleaning, while I scroll through the latest cat medical publications and the foremost peer reviewed research and nutritional advice.

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. I veer between fearing that she's not drinking enough with fretting

SARAH
WESTWOOD'S
A LITTLE
PROTECTIVE
OF HER AGED
MOGGY

that she's drinking more than usual. I monitor her water dish with the care and attention of a global warming researcher measuring arctic ice levels. "Cats are desert animals," I lecture my poor, long-suffering girlfriend as I reveal the findings on my latest graph, and then, more urgently, "they get all the moisture they need from food".

Another day, another episode of Litter Box Scavenger Hunt and I'm panicking away like a Californian gold miner when my girlfriend wanders in to make coffee. "Any joy?" "Nothing." I'm utterly despondent. One more day of this and it's off to the vet's. As most cat owners will testify, taking a cat to the vet's is not something that you undertake lightly. If you've ever had cause to wrestle a half-ton, five-metre monster crocodile, you'll know what it takes to get a small, pissed off, elderly tabby cat to the vet. It's such an evolutionary feline failing that you can't simply snap a lead on them and have them walk calmly out the door with you. Instead, you have to effectively trap your poor, unsuspecting friend. Then, wearing a pair of gardening gloves for protection, you must negotiate them into the carrier by first dislodging the four paws braced against the entrance of the carrier, one by one.

I mustn't be too hasty, though, I remind myself, after all I have misdiagnosed her in the past. A few

months ago I was convinced that she was finally succumbing to her arthritis. My extensive online research on that occasion suggested a little heat would bring some relief, so I found myself checking for drafts, filling up a nighty water bottle for her, and bolstering her up on her armchair with an extra tartan blanket and a little camping pillow.

Then one day a neighbour stopped me outside to regale me with stories of my cat's athleticism. "Oh, there's your little cat," he said, spotting her sitting in a patch of sun by our back door. "Isn't she lovely? She's been over here already this morning," he informed me.

"You must be mistaken. Our cat is elderly, and her arthritis is getting worse. She could never scale the wall." I replied. I was forced to concede, however, when he pulled out his phone and showed me a photograph he'd taken of Mim, fresh from having leapt his 5ft wall, reclining on his patio with her lips around a cat treat.

I'm shaken from this reverie by the sound of the cat meowing in my face and I suddenly remember I'm blocking her path to the litter box. Maybe she has sensed a trip to the vet's was imminent and the thought has "loosened" things up? Maybe she's now suffering from the opposite problem? Maybe it's time to stop worrying about my cat? **D**

Another
day,
another
episode of
Litter Box
Scavenger
Hunt

ON HOW LIFE IS...

SIT BACK AND ENJOY THE RIDE AS GABE, YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURHOOD LESBIAN, NAVIGATES THE HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS OF LIFE.

YEAH... SHE MAY NEED A LITTLE HELP.



claire barry



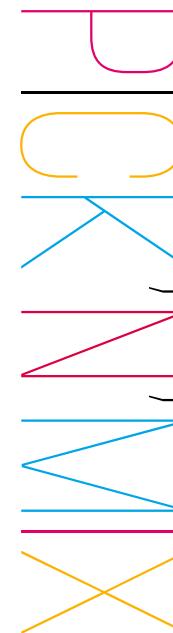
MARGARET CHO PERSON OF THE MONTH

God bless Margaret Cho. Never one to take shit lying down, the bi comedian hit out at fashion house Hervé Léger after comments by one of their directors that lesbians shouldn't wear their dresses. Using the hashtag, #boycottherveleger, Cho went head to head with the fashion industry, tweeting: "I remember being in a shop in the 90s and a dress being PULLED from my hands. They said THAT'S TOO SMALL YOU'LL RIP IT." She also said: "How can fashion change to celebrate women rather than continue #bodyshaming us?" Hervé Léger has since apologised, but will the label make a dress for Cho? We live in hope.



WE LOVE AMPFLY

We are totally in love with these battery-free iPhone speakers. The horn shape of these new Ampfly cases allows you play your music louder than ever before with unbelievable sound quality and they come in four colours that can be personalised with anything you want for a truly unique phone case. And if MTV says they're cool, who are we to argue? So whether you're searching for a perfect birthday gift or just want to treat yourself, check them out. ampflysound.com



CELEBRITY TWEETS

@vickybeeching

So impressed by @KeeganHirst's courage. Sport is still such a tough place for LGBT people. He's helping change that. Much respect!

@sueperkins

Final corrections made, book complete. Phew. I'm off for a lie-down.

@skinskinny

SKUNK ANANSIE RECORDING NEW ALBUM!!!!

@CaseyStoney

It's only taken us 3 years but finally we have been to see a wedding venue today and I have to say @HighHouseWed was beautiful #planning

@TheEllenShow

Starbucks announced that they're adding real pumpkin to their Pumpkin Spice Latte. My pumpkins have been real since 1958.

@Carrie_Rachel

Just had to do a pick-up on the recording of my audiobook for pronouncing "clitoris" wrong. #truestory #sexedfailedme

@RoseEllenDix

Can you please tweet Rosie and tell her I'm not angry that the vegetables had gone off. I'm just disappointed.

@jaydeadams

Ah Cilla mate. We loved you in the tele. #CillaBlack

HETEROSEXISM SUCKS



DIVA readers, I'm an optimist. Really, I am. But this month finds me despairing. You see, a few weeks ago I wrote a story

for our website about One Direction's Liam Payne and the comments he made at a recent gig. If you missed it, you can read the story here: tinyurl.com/DIVADLiam

It's not so much what the boyband member said that's got me down, but the reaction from a lot of people on our social media channels who couldn't understand for the life of them why we would chose to cover such a story.

People who might have been a bit peeved at what Liam said and his subsequent response were called "pathetic" and told in no uncertain terms to "grow up". And apparently DIVA, by covering such a story, was giving the gay community a bad name. Oh dear.

Let's clear a few things up. Of course, we don't believe Liam was being homophobic in the truest sense of the word or that any harm was intended when he implied that girls couldn't have girlfriends, but it was a perfect example of heteronormativity, which is a still a problem that needs highlighting. And Liam's reaction itself was problematic, refusing to acknowledge that a default heterosexuality setting can be harmful, especially to young fans who look to their idols to set an example. But more than that, it's worrying to see so many lesbian and bisexual women who don't realise (or don't care) that by failing to challenge heterosexism, we're complicit in our own subjugation.

If we don't challenge the idea that heterosexual is the norm, of course it has a detrimental effect on those of us who are "different". That drip, drip, drip of negativity permeates all of us, leaving an indelible imprint.

Yes, stick and stones do break our bones, but being othered is much more damaging in the longterm.

@Seej

STONEWALL'S CEO REFLECTS ON HER FIRST YEAR IN POST

First tell us about the highlights, Ruth.

The first year has really been about getting Stonewall onto the next level up, so having achieved full legal equality for lesbian, gay and bi people over the last 10 years, lots of people were saying to Stonewall, "What next?" We were acutely aware that it was ok to be gay if you were from a certain background but you still aren't safe when you go on the night bus, you still let go of your partner's hand when you turn a corner. Then there are lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people who are not yet able to be themselves in every area of life, whether that's because of poverty, faith or ethnicity, and Stonewall has a responsibility to go deeper into those communities and not just say, "Are you ok?" but, "Are we ok?" and, "How can we do what we can?" and that's been key. So we've been doing a lot of restructuring of Stonewall: a new mission, vision and values. It's all about empowering individuals, transforming institutions, changing hearts and minds, and changing the law.

What would you like Stonewall to do better?

I really hoped that by this time we'd have clear ideas about how Stonewall could best facilitate some work around racism, about how we could support the eradication of biphobia and look at poverty. That's taking longer and part of that is about a need to go to those communities and enable them to be part of a movement in a more structured way, and also recognising that Stonewall needs the infrastructure to manage that.

What else are you working on?

We're doing a lot of work around role models and leadership work and creating ways that individuals in communities can be empowered to be change agents. We're starting to give away our training programmes to local partners, like schools, who will charge for it so they can generate an income from it to support their local work.

Check out Stonewall's new website at stonewall.org.uk.

60 SECONDS WITH... RUTH HUNT



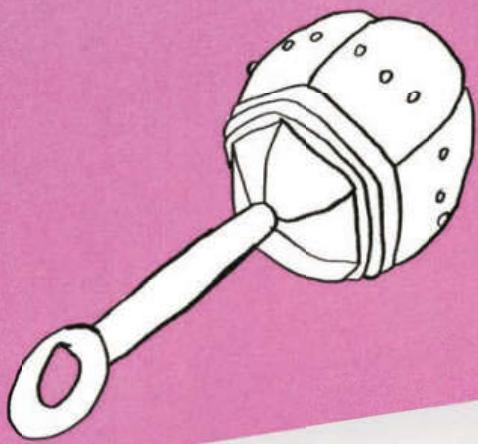
WE WERE THERE

BICON 2015, NOTTINGHAM

Billed as the "highlight of the bisexual year" BiCon 2015 didn't disappoint – with more than 400 participants taking part in a packed programme of workshops and entertainment, it was the biggest BiCon in the event's 33-year history. Entirely organised by volunteers, BiCon must have the best disabled access of any event in the LGBT calendar, truly making the effort to welcome all. DIVA spoke to bis and allies who called BiCon a "unique space" and "the only place where I can truly be myself without judgement". Next year's event takes place at Preston, 4-7 August.

For details, keep an eye on 2016.bicon.org.uk.

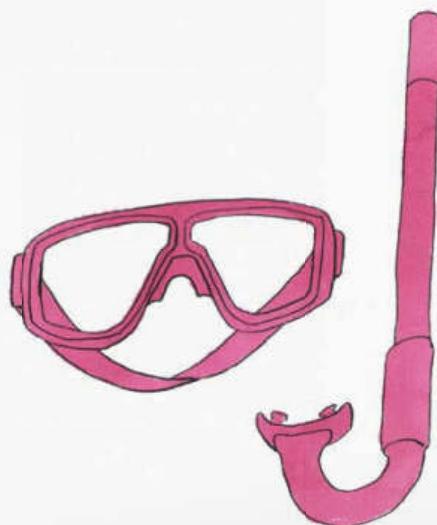
I'D CARRY A
BABY FOR YOU



SORRY YOU
MISREAD
MY SIGNALS



SORRY SHE WON'T
GO DOWN ON YOU



I'D CUT OFF
MY EXES FOR YOU

Unfriend

Sapphic Sorries

CHECK OUT THESE BRILLIANT OFFERINGS FOR GIRLS WHO LIKE GIRLS WHO LIKE CARDS

WORDS CARRIE LYELL

It's a story as old as time. Your best friend, who has been single forever, meets a nice girl. They go on a couple of dates and things are looking pretty good. You're already shopping for a badass wedding outfit because, let's be real, it won't be long before they walk down the aisle.

But then, out of nowhere, there are some irreconcilable lesbian differenc-

es. You know, the kind that make you jump back in the U-Haul and reverse quicker than you can say kd lang. But how do you let your friend know you're there for them?

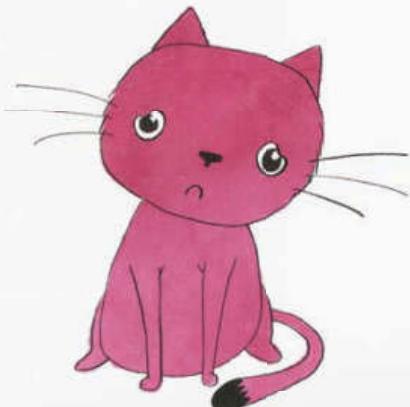
Fear not. Ellie and Celeste, two girls from Melbourne, came up with Sapphic Sorries – a totes awesome range of cards for you to express your lesbian condolences and get through

those tough times, like discovering the girl you thought was your soulmate doesn't like cats.

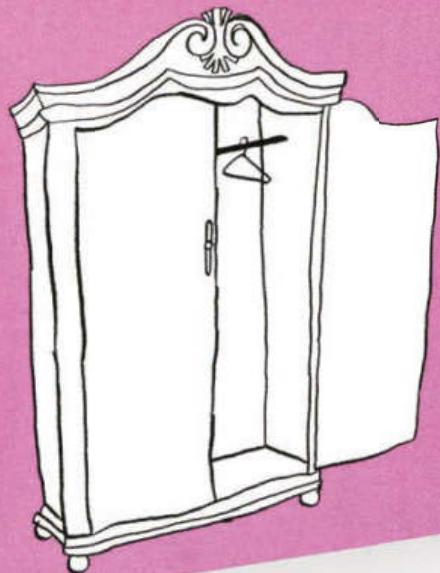
As well as saying sorry, Ellie and Celeste also have a range of cards for you to say I love you without having to get all like, romantic and shit. "I'd cut off my exes for you" is a personal favourite. ☺

Check them out at sapphosays.net.

SORRY SHE
DOESN'T LIKE CATS



I'D COME OUT
FOR YOU



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ESSENTIAL DREAM-POP

WIDOWSPEAK*All Yours (Captured Tracks)*

Brooklyn duo Widowspeak occupy the hinterland between Mazzy Star and the Velvet Underground. Think slow-burning songs with elastic guitars, wistful melodies and feather-light production, all led by Molly Hamilton's blissful vocals and fatalistic lyrics.

SEA LION*Desolate Stars (Turnstile)*

Gothenburg's Sea Lion Linn follows Big Moon EP with her enchanting debut album. Composed and recorded in solitude, it's an intimate affair best suited to late nights and headphones. Ghostlands and Desolate Stars capture her crooning over warm acoustic guitar and atmospheric effects whilst Room features hushed piano and melancholy vocals.

DOWNLOAD THIS

MAMMOTH PENGUINS*Hide and Seek (Fortuna Pop)*

An indie trio fronted by Emma Krupa, Mammoth Penguins make gloriously ramshackle songs with jangly guitars, power-pop melodies and coming-of-age choruses. The Hermit and Cries At The Movies are as brilliant as vintage Pavement, but it's Propped Up that will have you singing along: "Regrets, mistakes, moments of pain."

IF YOU LIKE BRAZILLIAN MUSIC

BIXIGA 70*III (Glitterbeat)*

One of Brazil's finest collectives, Bixiga 70 is a 10-piece orchestra that makes joyous, unpredictable instrumentals. Recorded live in their Sao Paulo studio, III features nine deeply rhythmic tracks that fuse elements of dub, samba and Ethio-jazz with Afro-funk, cumbia and carimbo.

**ANGEL HAZE***Impossible*

Queer rapper Angel Haze returns with another fearless single that captures her rapping defiantly over skeletal beats and a fierce hook.

MUSIC

Deliciously experimental: US Girls

US GIRLS*Half Free (4AD)*

Like St Vincent and Tune-Yards, US Girls makes deliciously experimental pop songs with a strong feminist core. Half Free only includes eight songs but each one holds its own perfectly. Sororal Feelings and Damn That Valley fuse broken beats and dub grooves with crystalline vocals whilst New Age Thriller morphs electro with shoegazing. Elsewhere, US Girls deconstructs and subverts classic jazz, funk and disco with moody percussion, warped synths and wonderfully playful vocals.

**SHELBY LYNNE***I Can't Imagine (Rounder)*

Recorded in Louisiana, Shelby Lynne's latest album is another collection of timeless, southern songs. Following You and Paper Van Gogh are country gems that showcase Shelby's sultry voice and acoustic guitar whilst Sold The Devil, Down Here and Be In The Now are infused with uplifting Alabama soul, country-funk and gospel.

**DERADOORIAN***The Expanding Flower Power (Anticon)*

Fans of Flying Lotus should love Angel Deradoorian's long-awaited debut. A treasure chest of sounds and melodies, it marries sublime Indian and Middle Eastern rhythms with deeply hypnotic freak-folk, psyche-pop and free-jazz grooves and drones. Listen closer to Deradoorian's lush vocals and you'll also hear a call for deeper consciousness.

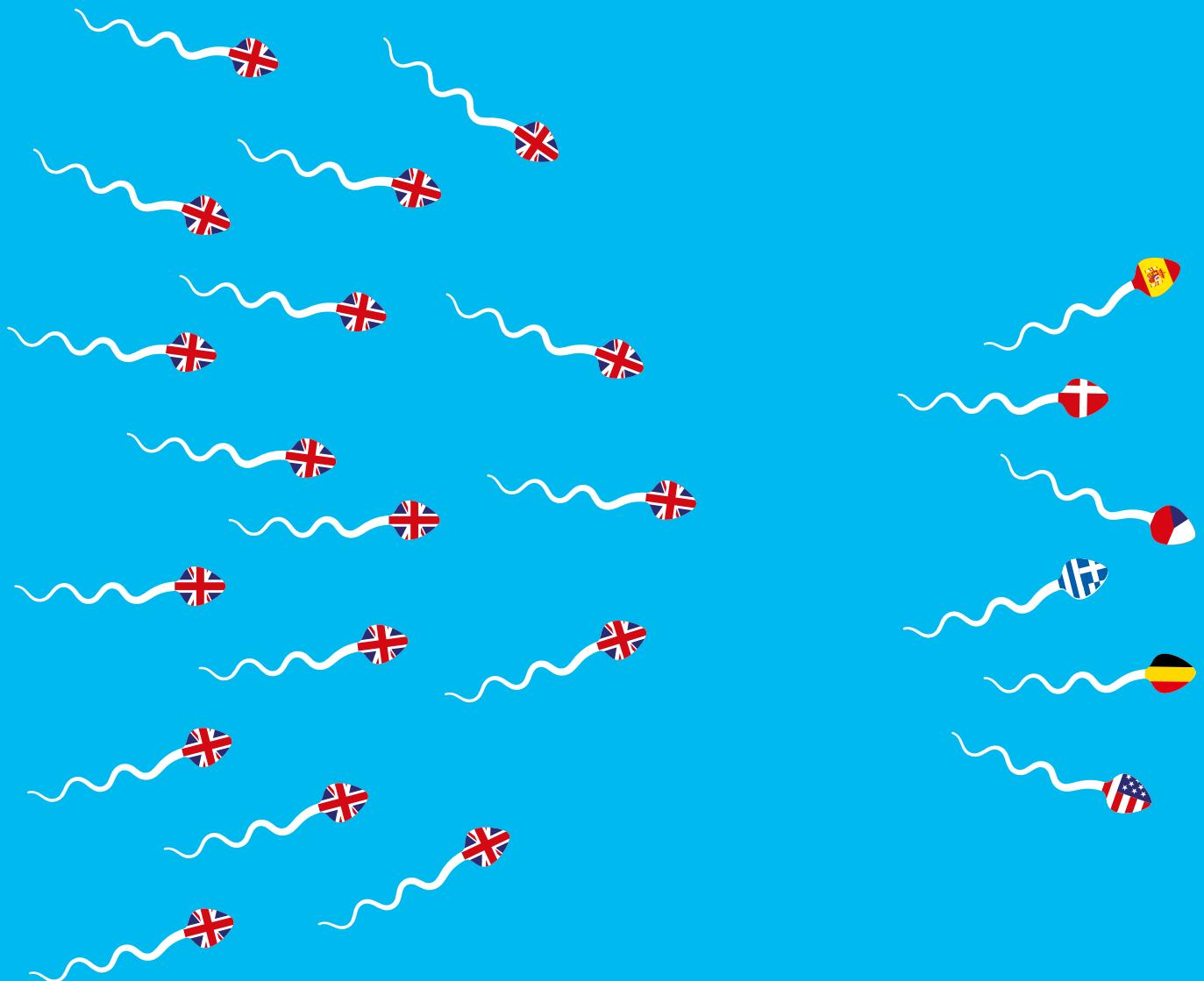
**COLD SPECKS***A Season of Doubt*

Cold Specks and Swans' Michael Gira team up for this haunting and powerful blues duet with minimal piano and saxophone.

**CHELSEA WOLFE***Grey Days*

Chelsea Wolfe shows Florence Welch there's other ways to build dramatic tension, layering heavy drums and guitars around icy synths and ethereal vocals.





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Bank**

The British are coming!

No need to go abroad – we have 25,000 vials of British donor sperm at your service at londonspermbankdonors.com

WE LOVE
RITA

Dark Scandinavian dramas like The Killing, The Bridge or Borgen are big news in the UK. But often comedies are lost in translation. Not so with Rita, a comedy about non-conformist teacher Rita (Mille Dinesen) who has more than a touch of Peter Pan syndrome and relates more to her teenage students than her peers. Now on its third season, this coming-of-age series is well worth getting hooked on. You might even learn some Danish in the process.

Seasons 1-3 are available on Netflix.

NOW FILMING
SCOTT AND BAILEY

Set excitement levels to high as a brand-new three-part Scott And Bailey special is on its way. Lesley Sharp (Janet Scott) and Suranne Jones (Rachel Bailey) return to tackle one of the biggest and darkest cases they've ever had to face. We can't wait to spend some quality time with our favourite detectives.

COMING SOON
CUFFS

We're really excited about BBC1's new police drama, Cuffs. Set in Brighton, the series features prominent LGBT characters, including Donna Prager (Eleanor Matsuura), a brilliant police officer who always puts her job first – minus the frustration of her long-term partner, / Keep an eye out for it in October.



WORDS: CARRIE LYELL, PHOTOS: VICKY HINNERS/INDUS FILMS, DEAN ROGERS, BBC/DIVERSE, CHANNEL 4, ITV

VISION



THIS IS ENGLAND '90

Look out your tie-die t-shirt and get your rave on because the wait is finally over. Following on from the brilliant This Is England '88, renowned filmmaker Shane Meadows picks up the action in the summer of 1990 for this brand-new four-part series. We join the gang for whizz-snorting shenanigans in fields, forests and factories with fun-loving fatties, bowl hairdos and baggy jeans as Woody, Lol and friends find themselves adapting to a new decade, and a new way of life.

Sunday 13 September, 9pm, Channel 4

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING
BOY MEETS GIRL

It seems like a long time since we first heard about Britain's first ever transgender sitcom so we're over the moon that it was worth the wait. For the uninitiated, Boy Meets Girl revolves around Leo, a young chap who finds himself deeply attracted to Judy, a transwoman, played by the marvellous Rebecca Root. Written by Elliott Kerrigan, here's hoping the six-part series sets the tone for others to follow.

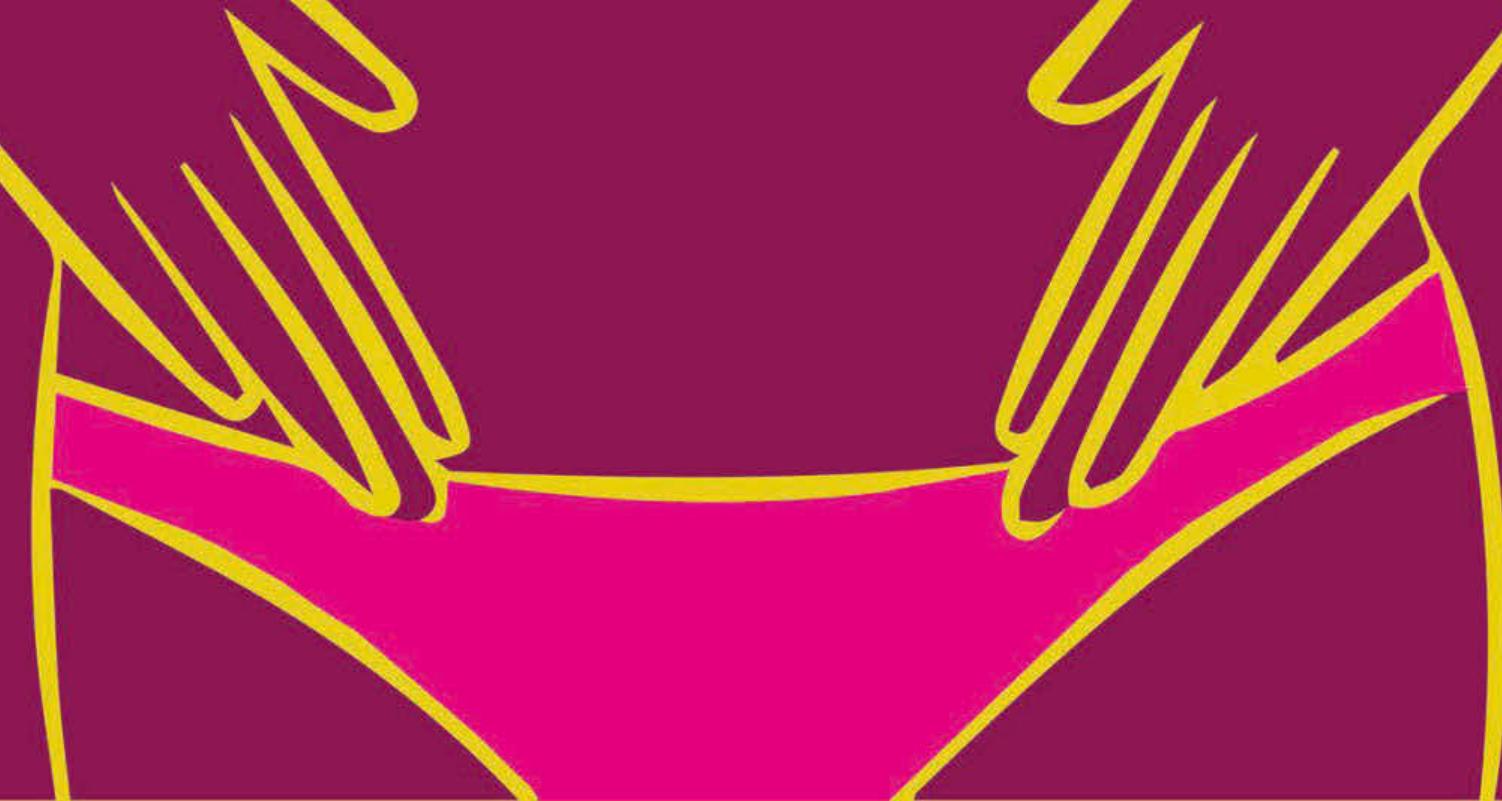
Thursdays, BBC2

CATCH UP NOW
KOLKATA WITH SUE PERKINS

Following last year's journey up the Mekong River, Sue Perkins is off on her travels again – this time in Kolkata, where she immerses herself in the complex life of the city to understand how it has become one of the most exciting places on earth. From hustling street kids to wealthy young entrepreneurs, Sue meets the people, rich and poor, that make up the rich tapestry of this bustling city, and paints a vibrant picture of modern-day India.

Available now on BBC iPlayer

PICK
OF THE
MONTH



The Word is back!

When did you last have the chance to talk
about sex and relationships with other
LBTQI women?

Join PACE for an evening of discussion; workshops & debate
as part of our 30th anniversary celebrations!

Thursday 19th November 2015

6-9pm

Central London (tbc)

to book your free place see pacehealth.org.uk



pace 
the LGBT+ mental health charity



FICTION
UNBECOMING

Jenny Downham

A gentle novel dealing with some timeless issues (identity, secrets, daring to be true to yourself), *Unbecoming* focuses on three generations of women from one family. Teenage Katie's journey in particular is likely to be pretty relatable for many lesbian and bisexual readers.

David Fickling Books, £14.99

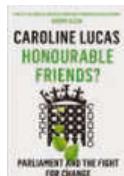


YA FICTION
THE BIG LIE

Julie Mayhew

Authority, rebellion, love and loyalty are at the heart of this thought-provoking YA novel set in an alternative present day – a fiercely oppressive, Nazi-ruled England – where model student Jessika and her outspoken first love, best friend Clementine, face some difficult choices.

Hot Key Books, £7.99



POLITICS
HONOURABLE FRIENDS?

Caroline Lucas

What's wrong with Westminster? Quite a lot according to sole Green MP Caroline Lucas who outlines in detail Parliament's various inefficiencies, voting vagaries, and resistance to reform in this wide-reaching insider's view from the heart of government. Conclusion? Change is desperately needed.

Portobello, £14.99



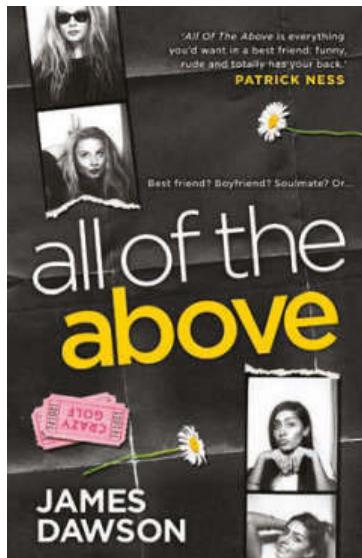
FICTION
WHISPERS THROUGH A MEGAPHONE

Rachel Elliott

Twitter addict Sadie Swoon connects with crush Alison. Sadie's husband Ralph meets whispering, troubled shut-in Miriam. Unexpected connections between people, old hurts and the nature of love are explored with tenderness and humour in this debut novel from gay author Rachel Elliott.

One, £12.99

BOOKS



YA FICTION

ALL OF THE ABOVE

James Dawson

Funny, smart, self-deprecating 16-year-old Toria arrives at Brompton Cliffs Academy and quickly makes new friends among the school's alternative crowd. Among these are cool, swearing, pink-haired Polly Wolff, who describes her sexual preference by explaining that she doesn't see penises or vaginas, just hot people or not hot people, and a handsome bass player called Nico, who plays in local band Judas Cradle. As Toria self-reflexively admits,

there are a lot of issues being dealt with in this novel: self-harm, eating disorders, bereavement, first sexual experiences and sexuality among them, but although there is a lot going on, it's far from the "mess" she describes it as. Rather, it's a well-written, very exuberant story about (one particular strata of) modern British teenage life that engages right from the start and carries you along at pace. Award-winning author James Dawson is a Stonewall Schools Role Model and his 2014 guide to being LGBT*, titled *This Book Is Gay*, is also well worth seeking out.

Hot Key Books, £6.99



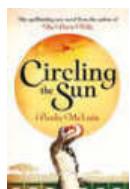
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL FICTION

7 MILES OUT

Carol Morley

Describing the fall-out that followed the suicide of the 11-year-old narrator's dad, *7 Miles Out* is a dark autobiographical novel about people in pain and the gradual road toward recovery. Smart and very well-written; issues around drinking and sexuality figure prominently.

Blink Publishing, £8.99



HISTORICAL FICTION

CIRCLING THE SUN

Paula McLain

Set in 1920s colonial Kenya, McLain's novel tells the true story of writer, horse trainer and bold aviation pioneer Beryl Markham. From lion attacks to romance (including a complicated love triangle involving Out of Africa writer Karen Blixen), it's a tale of great adventure and daring.

Virago, £14.99



FICTION

DIFFERENT FOR GIRLS

Jacquie Lawrence

Now available in paperback, Lawrence's drama-filled debut follows the entangled lives of three lesbian couples in west London. An unexpected pregnancy, a fake fiancé, and a long-term relationship threatened are just three complications in this pacey novel, the first in a trilogy.

Zite Books, £10

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THE LOBSTER

Dir Yorgos Lanthimos



There's no place for bisexuals in the extraordinary alternative world of *The Lobster*. Single people are herded into a mysterious hotel, where they must find a mate of their preferred gender within 45 days – or be turned into animals and released into the woods. A dystopian comedy seems like it'd be tough to pull off, but this all-star cast and brilliant script deliver funny and touching – if gruesome – results. Léa Seydoux (Emma in *Blue Is The Warmest Colour*) appears as the inscrutably powerful leader of the “loners”, while Rachel Weisz is luminous as a victim of a horrifying regime.

In cinemas 16 October

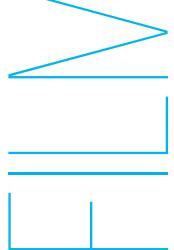
MISS YOU ALREADY

Dir Catherine Hardwicke



Over the past quarter-century, Drew Barrymore and Toni Collette have been involved in numerous great indie dramas and queer-friendly projects, but sadly this cancer movie about female friendship isn't one of them. After an anaemic *Twilight* and critically-panned *Red Riding Hood*, Catherine Hardwicke can't seem to stop turning out dull, clunkily-written movies. While this one does give a clear picture of the suffering caused by breast cancer, it's hard to care about its under-developed characters: it's never clear what's behind Milly's bad-girl exploits or Jess's strangely frozen-faced attempts to support her dying friend. Plus, there are no houseboats that spacious in London...

In cinemas 25 September

ONLINEMesmerising: Carey Mulligan in *Suffragette***SUFFRAGETTE**

Dir Sarah Gavron

This gripping drama, written by talented scriptsmith Abi Morgan, skips drawing-room politics to plunge right into an Edwardian laundry, in which women struggle long hours for pitiful pay under the constant threat of sexual abuse from foremen. We follow working-class Maud (a mesmerising Carey Mulligan) as she starts to question the terms of her life and encounters the suffragettes. The film spells out the consequences of unequal laws and emphasises the state's savage treatment of female activists (including a barely watchable force-feeding). At its close, a list of women's voting rights by country shows the battle is not yet won. (See *Diatribe* p14.)

In cinemas 12 October

DOCUMENTARY ON BLACK

LESBIAN “RULES”

SAME DIFFERENCE

If you thought the queer scene was liberal and accepting, Nneka Onuorah's documentary sets out to prove you wrong. She depicts a US-based black lesbian community in which studs are only supposed to date femmes, don't wear long weaves and should definitely never get pregnant. Opinions are shared and lessons are learned.

Find out more at facebook.com/samedifferencedocumentary.

PREMIERE OF CAROL

BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL

Want to be the first to see Cate Blanchett star in *Carol*? Based on the 1950s lesbian classic by Patricia Highsmith, it premieres on 14 October at the BFI London Film Festival. Further queer festival programming includes trans drama *Tangerine* and road movie *Grandma*, featuring Lily Tomlin and Laverne Cox.

The BFI London Film Festival takes place 7-18 October. Find out more at bfi.org.uk/lff.

GLOBAL LGBT FILM COMPETITION

THE IRIS PRIZE

There's £30,000 at stake in the Iris Prize, the world's largest LGBT short film competition, meaning its winner can immediately begin a new cinematic project. Catch the 30 shortlisted films – from film-makers in 18 countries – at the festival in Cardiff, and pick your favourite before the winner is announced. The festival takes place 7-11 October with the prize awarded on the last day. Find out more at irisprize.org.

ONLINE

INSPIRATION

GAY WEDDING IDEAS

If you're planning your big day then check this out, it's filled with quirky and cute ideas for ceremonies and gifts.

instagram.com/gayweddingideas

BLOG

LESBIAN WEDDINGS

This site shows off a huge selection of wedding days. It's super sweet and you won't be able to stop scrolling.

lesbian-weddings.tumblr.com

GIFTS

MRS & MRS

- Struggling for gift ideas? This site has some really original ideas and you can even personalise some of them! DIVA loves the gorgeous wedding candles.
- mrsandmrsproducts.co.uk

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BY THOMAS KNIGHTS



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TO BRIGHTEN UP 2016

A GIRL AT MY DOOR

A Girl At My Door is South Korean writer/director July Jung's first feature film and stars Sense8 actress Doona Bae as Young-nam, a promising police school graduate who has been posted to a rural backwater after her lesbianism is discovered. Here she finds a community in thrall to exploitative local businessman Yong-ha, whose motherless stepdaughter Dohee is frequently subjected to his drunken beatings.

Nominated for the Un Certain Regard award at Cannes 2014, A Girl At My Door presents a clear-eyed critique of a society that demonizes individuals on the basis of sex, race and sexuality, while ignoring and excusing domestic child abuse.

DIVA caught up with Doona Bae to find out what drew her to the movie.

DIVA: A Girl At My Door is very much an issues film – child abuse, alcoholism, homosexuality, migrant exploitation. What attracted you to it?

DOONA BAE: The most attractive part was the way the script was written. It was the one of most well-written scripts I have ever read, which made me want to know more about the writer in person. And as you said, it's about social issues I have always shared concerns over, and I love this kind of movie that can ignite the discourse [around] these issues.

How accepted is homosexuality in South Korea?

DIVA CHATS
TO SENSE8
STAR DOONA
BAE ABOUT
HER NEW FILM,
A KOREAN
THRILLER WITH
A LESBIAN
HEROINE



Doona Bae (right) with Kim Sae Ron in Korean thriller *A Girl At My Door*

In urban areas such as Seoul, it is comparably more accepted than in the small village that was the background of this movie, and starts to have more understanding gradually. But we still have a long way to go.

Have there been many South Korean films made about lesbian characters?

I cannot say that there has been many. But recently we started to have lesbian characters featured in mainstream film.

Young-nam is clearly a great cop who is respected by her new colleagues in spite of the fact that she is a woman. What is the position of women in South Korea?

Like many Asian countries, I think there are lot of talented and gifted women in many ways, who would appreciate fairer treatment and respect in Korea.

You play another kick-ass woman (literally) in Sense8. What do you particularly enjoy about playing

your character, business executive cum amateur kickboxer, Sun Bak?
What I love about playing Sun is that she is a woman of maternal love and bearing lot of responsibilities, but she gets to express these in very masculine way and she really enjoys kicking ass.

I see you were in a Korean film called Take Care Of My Cat (2001), which looks great fun. It's about a group of girls who are friends – are there any lesbian characters in it?

Very intriguing question! I never thought about the movie in this way. To be honest with you, I'm not even sure if my character is straight or lesbian [laughs].

Can you tell us anything about your next film? Is there a part you'd really like to play in future?

I'm looking at several projects now, but nothing to officially announce, except for season two of Sense8 next year. I would love to be in an insanely crazy comedy film like Shaolin Soccer... ☺

DIVA
ADDITIONAL
DIGITAL
CONTENT

More information on p5
divadigital.co.uk



BACK TO THE FUTURE

Facing the future: Sophie Ward

I meet Sophie Ward during a rehearsal break for the upcoming stage adaptation of Aldous Huxley's portentous novel *Brave New World*. She is in dire need of milkshake, she says, ushering me out of the bustling Jerwood Space in the direction of gourmet hamburger (and milkshake, it turns out) joint, Byron.

As we wander past bars and restaurants with midweek office-workers spilling onto the pavement, she enthuses infectiously about the play. I feel swept along; my brain is firing like a Catherine wheel so when we arrive at Byron and seat ourselves, we have covered *Star Trek* as well as art and literature during the economic downturn when Huxley wrote his dystopian novel in 1932.

Sophie muses that the society imagined by Huxley and set in London in 2540 is a bit like the Borg from *Star Trek*, where each person becomes absorbed into the collective. "To completely abandon all sense of [individual] identity is horrific," Sophie reflects, "but I couldn't bear what was said by [Margaret Thatcher] that there is 'no such thing as society' because I think it's really important that we look after and think about other people, those who have less than us, our environment, so I do believe in collective responsibility."

In Huxley's *Brave New World*, written at the time of eugenics, increasing mechanisation and the creation of the atomic bomb, the fictitious society reflects the author's fear of what we might do to ourselves in the name of progress. Does she see aspects of Huxley's futuristic society in London 2015? "Definitely," she says, smiling wryly. "The way we volunteer our privacy, the way we embrace consumerism, the infiltration of advertising into our lives and objects of desire we personally have to own, rather than beautiful pieces of art that we might look at together, and also the quick solutions and simple answers to things, possibly sedating ourselves and numbing ourselves to everyday experience [by] overdosing on anything really: TV, alcohol, things that ensure you're not thinking too much."

I'm a terrible culprit for that."

Like the creamy vanilla milkshake Sophie sips between sentences, conversation with the 50-something actress is rich.

What, I wonder, would Huxley think if he were alive today? And would he have been friendly to lesbians? "Hmm, interesting question," Sophie says, brow furrowed. "I've been reading some of his [short book written in the 1950s after his experiences taking the hallucinogenic drug mescaline] *Doors Of Perception* and he was definitely interested in people exploring new ways of being. I think he might be quite impressed by how creative we are and what we've come up with technologically and industrially; planning the next trip to Mars, I think he'd be interested in that. We are ingenious and I think he'd be interested [to see how so] much has changed since he was writing. And on the lesbian front, he and his wife had an open marriage and at one time were both in love with the same woman."

In the play Sophie plays the part of Margaret Mond, regional world controller for Western Europe, and "one of the few people making all the decisions for the entire planet," she explains. Although she can see the logic of Mond's edict to trade personal freedom for global (if drug-induced) peace and ersatz happiness, she admits she'd reject the position in real life.

"As someone who likes dressing up and playing around, I don't think I'd be very suited to it. Although I did once do one of those careers tests and it said I should start a religion. I didn't know it was a career! It wasn't offered to me by the career advisory service at school," she laughs. "The thing is," she confides, "I'm not big on a lot of responsibility. I'm an old hippy, so I'd really want everyone to have a nice time and get on with each other."

The noise and hubbub of evening diners and drinkers grows louder around us as our discussion becomes more personal. I ask if she's still surprised at how hung up some people still seem to be about sexuality and gender roles. "It is odd, isn't it, but the thing that concerns me is that often

ACTRESS
SOPHIE WARD
TALKS ABOUT
HER ROLE IN
A NEW STAGE
ADAPTATION
OF BRAVE NEW
WORLD
WORDS JANE
CZYZELSKA

straight people will say, 'Oh, there's no problem any more, everything's fine!' People say that to me all the time: 'Oh Sophie, you're alright, you don't have to worry, you're fine'. And I'm like, really? Really? Come and spend the day with me and see how easy it is. Just because the world that I see and the people we know seems better, we can't forget about how difficult some people's lives still are."

I've read somewhere about how her sons deftly field homophobic questions about their family. They seem very level-headed, I tell her, and hopefully a sign of a more relaxed approach to sexuality, especially so in the light of the recent YouGov report that found one in two young people say they're not "100% heterosexual."

"Yes, I'm interested to learn there's a whole generation of younger actors – male and female – who are choosing not to identify themselves as one thing or another or put a label on themselves and I respect that choice. But I'm not sure that we're quite there yet as a society. I certainly wouldn't like not being out. As you know, it's very tiring coming out all the time in different ways every day."

There are occasions, however, when coming out can be a joy. When I ask Sophie about how she feels after marrying her long-term partner, the writer Rena Brannan, for the third time in December last year, she tells me a poignant story. When she and Rena went through American customs last month, it was the first time in 20 years of going in and out of the US that they walked through Los Angeles airport as a married couple. They were both crying and when they got to the passport desk the border controller asked what was the matter. Sophie explained. "They're quite hard-bitten those guys, but he just looked at me and said, 'Ok'. Even he could see that was a moment." ☙

"Straight people say there's no problem any more. That's not what I see"

Brave New World tours the UK from 4 September. Visit theatrecloud.com/brave-new-world for tour details and tickets.

Sophie Ward is a judge for the Green Carnation LGBT writing prize. Winners will be announced in October 2015. greencarnationprize.com



ADDITIONAL
DIGITAL
CONTENT

More information on p5
divadigital.co.uk

The couple that isn't:
Regina and Emma (with Henry)
in Once Upon A Time

It's queer baiting,
not representation

EFFI MAI
EXPLORES THE
PLEASURES
AND THE
PITFALLS
OF THE
PROGRAMMES
THAT JUST
CAN'T COMMIT
TO THEIR
QUEERS

'm settling down to watch my favourite series and my girlfriend is screaming, "Oh, they're so going to kiss in this episode," and, "Oh my god, the sexual tension is unreal". The two characters are women and we're not watching a gay show. But we continue, series by series, hoping that something will happen between them. We're being completely queer baited and we know it.

First, what is queer baiting?

Already a thing in some online dictionaries, queer-baiting is "what happens when a series wants to attract a queer audience without alienating their homophobic/transphobic audience. They introduce a character that queer people can relate to. They use the details and feelings common to queer people's lives to make it very obvious to anyone who is queer, that the character is also queer. They know that because there is very little queer representation in media, queer people are going to latch onto this character, and therefore latch onto the series" (tinyurl.com/DIVAQB).

We've seen it plenty of times in teen shows where the main character will kiss a girl or find one attractive, and will have all lesbians on tenterhooks before the programme-makers decide that she's straight again, or that she was just having a dream. But more and more there are characters on our screens who lead us into thinking they live an LGBTQ lifestyle, but never actually do.

The show I'm mainly talking about is the series Once Upon A Time, set to air its fifth season this September. The show revolves around a young boy who has two mothers – his adoptive mum, Regina and his birth mum, Emma – and their fight to keep their family and their hometown safe. And let me tell you, four seasons in, Emma and Regina have maybe 1000% more chemistry with each other than with either of their male love interests.

Throughout the story they spend a

lot of time staring at each other, giving each other the kind of look you give someone before you jump their bones. At one point the phrase "how to get her to taste my forbidden fruit" is uttered. And if that isn't quite enough, they always seem willing to sacrifice their lives for each other.

Another big one is Teen Wolf, where there have been many hints that one of the leading male characters is bisexual. Stiles is the human best friend of the main werewolf and many fans think there is chemistry between Stiles and Derek, another werewolf on the show. I have seen many clips of the show being mashed up with gay porn scenes and I have to say I'm quite impressed with how this fandom think. In sheer volume for one.

For its past season, Supernatural has been criticised a lot for the "queer hints" it has been dropping, angering a lot of fans. The sexual tension between the two main characters, Dean and Castiel, is very obvious. I know this because I once switched on mid-season, had no idea what I was watching, but for sure thought it must be a show about an adorable gay couple.

So why queer bait at all?

Ellie, who works at one of the leading networks in America, suggests two reasons. One is that it's how writers want to include members of the LGBTQ community. "On some programmes, queer-baiting is a good thing as the shows can be very gay-friendly without having a gay character in them. I think the more this is shown on television and the more young gay people see that it's an ok thing, the better. Like when a programme shows its support for gay marriage and stuff."

But then there's the second reason, the downside of it all.

"There are some shows that simply use it as a marketing tool. From our research, the queer community post more about characters if there's even the slightest chance they're gay. On Tumblr, fandoms will 'ship' the two

characters, on Twitter, people are having debates and fans will make art and videos and gifs, all of something happening between the two. Because they want it to happen so much."

Even the actors themselves don't deflect the rumours. When slash fiction writers shipped SwanQueen, Once Upon A Time actresses Jennifer Morrison and Lana Parilla both sported t-shirts with the slogan and posted pictures on social media. And when asked in interviews about the relationship, they will never deny the possibility of something happening; even though, as Ellie explains, "If a show is on in the States at 8pm, there isn't a chance of it going down".

Another for the lesbians is the series Rizzoli & Isles, where the show's starring actresses admitted that some of the sexual tension between the title characters was a deliberate play to their lesbian viewers. From longer glances to touches, and especially the scenes where they are lying in bed together chatting.

Why is it troubling?

There are so many people, myself included, who start watching a show and hope that there is at least one gay character, and the creators are aware of this. There aren't many characters who aren't straight given leading parts and so it's a way of hooking us in, without actually representing us. And because they don't want to put off any homophobic viewers, they will never represent us. It makes me even gladder to think that shows like Orange Is The New Black and Modern Family exist, showing happy queer people.

So I will continue to watch Once Upon A Time. And maybe when we get to season 23 we can finally rejoice in the kiss that all fans have been waiting for. But for now, the fan-made mash-up between Once Upon A Time and the film Bound, will just have to be replayed a lot. 

What do you think? Tweet us @DIVAmagazine or email letters@divamag.co.uk.

"If a show is on in the States at 8pm, there isn't a chance of gay love going down"



The Promise (1016x660.4mm. Acrylic, 2014)
Opposite: **Passion's Shelter** (457.2x711.2mm. Acrylic, 2015)

PAINTING THE EMOTIONAL DANCE

ANNA MCNAY REVELS IN SHALINI SEEREERAM'S COLOURFUL AND SEDUCTIVE IMAGES OF WOMEN

"I am putting myself out there and challenging silences. I know I am not the same but why must I be quiet?"

Indo-Trinidadian artist Shalini Seereeram (born 1972) has been representing the growing LGBT art and culture community in the Caribbean for the past 15 years and is the first female artist to publicly portray intimacy between women in her country.

Her latest series of works, *Intimate Moments*, focuses entirely on the interplay between women and comprises vibrantly colourful, fluidly sensual paintings, in acrylics, oils and nail varnish, showing women embracing – entangled and entwined – sharing a closeness that requires no words.

"Intimacy to me is not purely physical," says Seereeram. "It is an emotional dance within ourselves. If I cannot entirely connect with someone on a level of compassion and understanding, it becomes shallow and superficial."

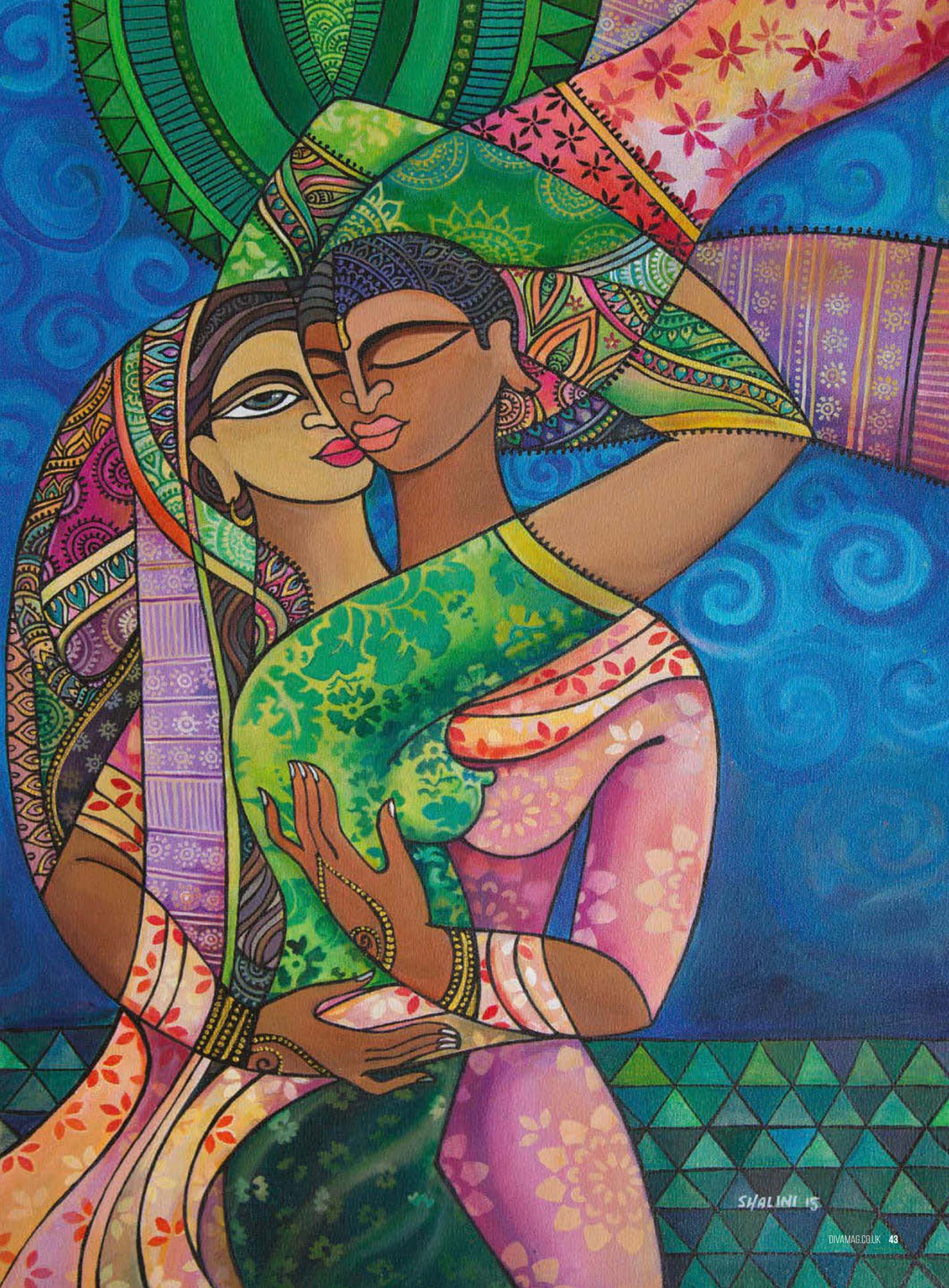
Seereeram strives to represent

that subtle intimacy that only women can truly share. Hailing from a remote part of Trinidad, living amid sugar cane fields, her work has caused something of a stir in her native community.

"There can be a certain underlying hesitation and mixed reviews because of innate prejudices in society," she admits. But Seereeram is not ashamed to bare her intimate moments and hopes that her work will encourage others to accept themselves for who they are. "There is someone out there who is saying they are not seeing images of themselves," she says. And that is something she's working to change.

Shalini Seereeram's exhibition, *Intimate Moments*, was held this August at Campbells Framing And Art Gallery, South Kensington. Her works are still available for viewing and purchasing at the gallery. ☎

campbellsoftlondon.co.uk
shaliniseereeram.com



SHALINI 15



Throwing shade on whitebaiters

UKIP's LGBT contingent attended the Pride In London march this year, amidst divided opinion on their inclusion. This was unsurprising given that they are a fundamentally racist party. They are also, at the very least, conflicted on the gay question; Nigel Farage, the party leader, wanted UKIP to support gay marriage, against the majority opinion, whilst the Christian Soldiers (yes, they're real) in the party believe that any LGBT school education is tantamount to sexual grooming! Clearly, whether the gay UKIPers forced their way or were allowed onto the Pride march, they felt entitled to be there. I want to look more closely at this entitlement.

Whilst DIVA and Gay Star News have already covered the UKIP/Pride story fully online there remains, I think, more to be discussed within our so-called LGBT "community" on this matter. It brings up for me that rarely discussed and invisible topic of whiteness, or white privilege, which let's be honest, recedes into the background these days as we white LGBT folk use our individual oppressions, like being sexual minorities, to distance ourselves from the reality of white privilege. These days "multiculturalism" as an idea has blended all injustices together into a kind of mixed-up soup and the result is a depoliticisation of awareness around race and gender because all oppression is seen as equally valid in any context, always located in the present moment.

But what is white privilege? Very broadly speaking, it has three main components. The first is to do with authority and power, the law, values; norms that are all made by and for whites and have reproduced themselves over time to the extent that they become what the gay author and academic Nelson M Rodriguez describes as "a normalising technology", which socially constructs the types of people and behavior that is valued. So, for example, a soldier, a family man, a white MP, a straight woman. Any thing or person dissenting from these value systems is considered of less value and in certain cases categorised as a criminal, whore, terrorist, etc. So in

WHITE LGBT PEOPLE NEED TO WISE UP TO COMMUNITY RACISM, SAYS ALENA DIERICKX

LGBT organisations this is mirrored in that mostly white gay men run the show and make the decisions that get funding. Things stay very white.

The second component is heterosexism, which is the social arrangement that protects "decent" society from "perversion" but it also upholds the idea that straight love is superior and opposite-sex-partner family life is the best living arrangement, and everything is designed with this in mind. Only recently are black and Asian families or individuals represented in ads to any extent. We collude in this when we marry because marriage is so closely connected to a history of interracial fears about white purity and entitlement. Lastly, because we don't examine whiteness as a system or an identity it is hidden or invisible and so we don't see how pervasive it is.

We need to seriously reflect on all this if we want to take part in a Pride that has any meaning. Pride In London takes place in a country that is more likely to kill people of colour in custody and incarcerates more non-whites, proportionately speaking. In schools and universities we can be educated without knowing a single thing about the contribution of non-whites to history, politics, art and philosophy, skewing our white sense that progress and good and value equals white. All this without actually and actively doing anything specific, it is simply an omission repeated over and over again until it feels "normal".

I've lost count of the number of diversity courses I've attended where people say things like, "I just don't care if someone is black or gay etc, it doesn't make any difference," or, "I don't get how you can say we live in a racist society, I'm not racist, I have black friends!" If you haven't seen the TV programme How To Get A Council House, it is full of usually white, evicted council tenants who don't hold back on their feelings of white entitlement to housing and other resources ahead of any black or "foreign" people, regardless of whether they have ever contributed anything at all themselves to the National Insurance fund, or indeed to civic life. White is a right in

itself, it seems. Check it out if you don't think Britain is a racist place. But back to the UKIP story...

It's a story that has two opposing versions of the truth. (You can read about it here if you haven't already: gaystarnews.com/article/ukip-at-pride-in-london-what-really-happened.) It seems to me that UKIP's attendance at Pride is thanks to the rather ambivalent and indecisive actions of the Pride In London leaders. Unsurprisingly, it didn't go down too well with many people, myself included, as it seemed to signify a profound failure within our so-called community to understand the difference between the principle of free speech – an abstract, white, male concept – on the one hand and the ability to take a stand and speak out or be decisive even when people, often in a dominant position, disagree with you. If Pride is about anything politically, it's about that distinction. You could see it as the universal versus the particular, or the dominant versus the marginal. In other words, who holds the power? Who is allowing UKIP to attend and at what cost?

It is perfectly ok and often necessary to say that you don't want people who hold certain views at your party, rally or meeting. This is not the same as excluding people for who they are. You can change what you think but who you are is fundamental. The difference is not one of philosophy but one of positioning or situation. If someone's racist presence isn't an issue for you, then you are not the right person to be deciding whether they should be there or not. It needs to be a much more inclusive and considered decision-making process. What is Pride for, if not to make a stand? The issues we stand up for and against will change over time, but we need to look within and challenge our own positions in relation to others because being gay is not just about the white, male versions of what that means. Pride only makes sense in the context of resistance or opposition, otherwise it simply becomes nothing... or just a random party.

In the open letter to Pride In London put together by activists CN

If someone's racist presence isn't an issue for you, then you are not the right person to be deciding whether they should be there or not



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Lester, Jacq Applebee and others in response to UKIP's inclusion, they argue that the Pride In London community advisory board (CAB) was not consulted about UKIP's request to march, and Pride In London's board has admitted this. Bi activist and rep Jacq was the only person of colour on the CAB, which illustrates how whiteness prevails at Pride In London.

Pride In London also said that they had just as many people wanting UKIP to attend as those who didn't want them there, which indicates, I think, a political blind spot.

How do we weigh up these competing interests or points of view expressed by our community members? Those LGBT people who said, "Yes, we all have a right to our opinion, let UKIP in," are either not thinking a great deal, or are in a position of privilege. As white people, we don't have to think about our own whiteness because it doesn't prevent us doing anything, is never the reason for getting stopped in a car all the time, or getting institutionalised or medicated. Whiteness doesn't characterise you as aggressive, oversexed or a criminal. Whiteness always operates in the present, never carries the full burden of a history of being enslaved, "othered" or demonised by white supremacy. This constant and historic threat of violence is why author and activist bell hooks refers to this as White Terror. Sound extreme? Well, yes, imagine for a moment what this might feel like as a constant experience in your life, despite legal penalties being in place to "protect" you.

Many white people become angry when confronted by this reality because we don't recognise our own behaviour being a part of this white-dominated past; it feels extreme and distant, and it isn't how we like to see ourselves. That is precisely how white privilege operates. Or as Nelson M Rodriguez puts it: "White power secures its dominance by seeming not to be anything in particular."

In other words, all the years of inherited white entitlement make things feel as if they had always been that way, that power was not seized from people of colour. We are blinded by our whiteness from being able to see just how much it matters to prevent UKIP and groups like them from attending Pride because it disrespects

and excludes people of colour in a single action that claims to be about freedom of speech.

"Freedom of speech" is often cited in order to delegitimise non-normative identities or positions, or to simply ignore or refuse to accept the complaints of marginal groups. Recently trans people have been on the end of this type of strategy. Some feminists and other commentators cannot accept that trans women can claim a female identity and they can only fall back on an old "universal" right of free speech to justify their own superior feeling of entitlement to femaleness, thus excluding others from inhabiting this identity. They cannot see that they are claiming a position of oppressive dominance by setting the terms of an argument where trans people are being asked to justify who they are. When this provokes anger in trans people because of the oppressiveness of this arrogant demand, they are characterised as just aggressive men leaking out of a phoney façade of female parody. This is why trans women are in a marginal position and, like people of colour, the perception that they're violent is because of who they are. It isn't incidental.

This brings me to something I mentioned earlier about our own sense of oppression as LGBT people. It's real, no doubt about that, but it tends to be situational, that is, it isn't always present like the colour of your skin. It has been referred to as "a politics of forgetting" in the book Whiteness; A Strategic Rhetoric by Nakayama and Kriekz, which happens when we are not confronted regularly by oppressive rules, regulations, situations, absences etc. Or we have just got comfortable having some privileges extended to us.

When I think about being a lesbian in the UK, the feelings of oppression I experience almost daily are heterosexism and male dominance rather than direct lesbophobia, and it is these experiences that help me get insight into racism because, as with racism, legislation and rights don't make the power imbalances disappear. Men still hold all power and privilege over women globally and heterosexism is everywhere. Lez and bi or trans relationships are not represented enough and the contributions we make in the world are ignored. Our stories remain untold. So

we have a lot to gain by understanding and responding to racism in the UK, because all our oppressions are linked in this white value system.

The leaders of PIL need to give up some power and decision-making to community representatives, with less white presence. And they need to find ways to attract people of colour on board and then really listen to them. Maybe we don't need leaders, maybe a collective or social enterprise would be better, maybe we need to rethink what Pride is?

But what can we lez and bi folk do? We should be vocal about who is represented at talks and meetings, and in written content in the media, what material we are given at uni or in school. Actively check out black activists, poets, theorists and scientists and fill that knowledge gap. Ask yourself, "What's missing here, and what can I do or bring to change this?"

This lack of awareness about what it might feel like to be black and inhabit a space with racists on the one day in the year that you take to the streets to celebrate the diversity of sexuality is pretty unforgivable. No excuse I heard was credible. Did PIL consult their community advisory board or BME representative sufficiently? We know that they didn't even feel the need to because they told Gay Star News, "The directors admit they didn't tell the advisory board UKIP was on the list of participants, as they don't usually discuss the list with the board".

Yet we do know that the Pride In London march is well-attended by BME people and they also volunteer to make the day as fun and safe as an event that size can be, which makes this fiasco all the more annoying. Why have an advisory board, or indeed any community representation, if you don't feel a need to make use of it? This is tokenistic. Pride In London lost its appeal for me a long time ago, with its increasing corporate takeover of the march. It has no political credibility and it could use a rethink on form and content. I think it's time to throw some shade on white Pride; we need representatives who can really run the show and not sell some of us down the river. ☩

The leaders of Pride need to give up some power and decision-making to community reps, with less white presence

What are you thinking? Tweet [@DIVAMagazine](#) or email letters@divamag.co.uk.



Amy Dillwyn (right) and Olive Talbot, Buxton 1871. Opposite:
Amy at home in Swansea, around
1905, with her trademark cigar

“Romantically, passionately, foolishly”

KIRSTI BOHATA
UNCOVERS
THE LIFE OF
AMY DILLWYN,
VICTORIAN
WRITER,
INDUSTRIALIST
AND
CELEBRITY
CIGAR-SMOKER

Aged 15, Amy Dillwyn fell in love, “romantically, passionately, foolishly”, with Olive Talbot, the daughter of a Victorian millionaire. Twelve years later, in 1872, Amy began to refer to Olive as her “wife” and in the 1880s she would transcribe her passionate devotion in a series of successful novels. The truth about Amy Dillwyn’s sexuality has been quietly suppressed, but now her diaries are being edited for publication and her lesbian novels reissued. Her unusually frank private diaries are an important addition to the ongoing recovery of lesbian history, and her unconventional fiction invites a reassessment of Victorian women’s writing and the literary coding of same-sex desire.

Until recently, Amy Dillwyn was best known for her extraordinary success as an industrialist and businesswoman. Aged nearly 50, she was forced into frugal lodgings when her father died (he was a well-respected and longstanding Liberal MP for Swansea but not a very good businessman). This catastrophic change in fortune was the making of her. No longer a semi-invalid, Dillwyn transformed her father’s near-bankrupt spelter works into a lucrative company with herself as sole director. As head of Dillwyn & Co she travelled to Europe and North Africa. Aged 60 she travelled by donkey high into the snow-covered Atlas mountains and went down into underground mines in Algeria looking for high-grade zinc ore for her works.

Dressed in her trilby hat, stout boots and a practical short skirt, Amy

Dillwyn became a celebrity. In 1902 she was described by the *Pall Mall Gazette* as "one of the most extraordinary women in Great Britain", and she went on to stand for local elections, campaign for women's suffrage and to support the rights of women workers – sharing a stage with female Workers' Union and Labour campaigners.

A female industrialist was unusual enough in the 1890s, but what really caught the attention of the press on both sides of the Atlantic and as far away as Australia, was the fact that she was, as one headline put it, "A woman who smokes cigars". And large cigars at that – the size seemed to matter to journalists. Dillwyn was amused and gratified by the attention, comfortable with what she called her "difference". She would, of course, have been well aware of the sexual and gender ambiguity suggested by her cigars. Cigars were favoured by the cross-dressing French novelist George Sand, whose relationships with men and women brought her notoriety in the early 19th century. Emily Faithful – the founder of the Victoria Press, staffed exclusively by women – whom Dillwyn knew, also smoked cigars and was publicly linked to sexual scandal. (Faithful's friendship with Helen Codrington and her part in the infamous Codrington divorce scandal was recently retold in Emma Donoghue's novel *The Sealed Letter*.)

But before Dillwyn took to industry, she was already an accomplished novelist and a regular reviewer for *The Spectator*. She wrote about social injustice and class conflict, about Welsh riots and popular uprisings, about the irritations of women's clothing and the wider restrictions imposed on women, and repeatedly about love between women. The lesbian plots of Dillwyn's novels are coded, but they describe a passionate, undying devotion of one woman for another. They also examine the pain yet simultaneously the spiritual value of unrequited love. Her interest in unrequited desire is based on her own experiences. Intimate friends though they were – taking trips together and exchanging tokens of affection (including music, as shown in the picture, taken on one of their trips to Buxton 1871) – Amy wrote regretfully of Olive that "I can't make her love me as I love her". Calling Olive her "wife" later seems to have been an acknowledgement Olive's importance to Amy, rather



than a description of their developing relationship. It is no wonder, then, that one of Dillwyn's favourite models was that of chivalric, courtly love. Writing in her diary she says: "I should like to have been a knight in the old days of chivalry and whether she cared for me or not I would never have deserted my ladye love while I lived." Another idea she returns to time and again in her diaries and fiction, is the idea of a spiritual union: "Does my spirit, which is constantly seeking for Olive and yearning for her, exercise any influence over hers or ever meet hers ...?" she wondered on one lonely evening in June 1872.

Dillwyn's love for Olive is the theme of all her most important novels. She began by creating male characters in love with an unobtainable woman. These men are lower class or criminal, like the Welsh-speaking nationalist involved in an uprising against an exploitative ruling class in *The Rebecca Rioter* (1880). In this story, the hero is separated from his beloved lady by his class and ultimately by transportation for his part in the riots. The use of male characters as lesbian "stand-ins" is not unusual in 19th- and 20th-century writing, but Dillwyn quickly stepped out from this disguise and wrote openly about the infatuation of one woman for another.

In her fourth novel, *Jill* (1884), Dillwyn created a surprisingly modern feminist heroine – a feisty young woman who calmly commits fraud, petty theft and deception. Disguising herself as a maid she runs off to

London to seek her fortune, falls in love with her mistress and travels with her across Europe. The mistress-maid relationship as a vehicle for representing same-sex desire is a powerful one. In her cross-class disguise as maid Jill has special access to Kitty even while class barriers prevent intimacy, while her masquerade generates an erotic frisson because Jill could come out to Kitty at any time. In the lesbian climax of the novel, the two women are imprisoned together by brigands. In their mutual calamity all class barriers melt away and there is a moment of sublimated union, a moment of spiritual affinity in which "our identities were well nigh merged into one".

In *Jill*, and other novels, Amy Dillwyn wrote suggestively of a "strange fascination" between two women. Writing against the patriarchal assumption that two women could only set up home together as a last resort, her novels validate lesbian love as a desirable alternative to marriage and family duties. In her novels, she turned to literary codes which emphasised a challenge the social order – her characters cross boundaries of gender, class and the law – in order to depict a same-sex desire that she wanted to be paramount, not a last resort. **D**

Dillwyn's unusually frank diaries are an important addition to lesbian history

Three of Amy Dillwyn's novels are published in the Honno Classics series, including *Jill* with a new introduction by Kirsti Bohata. honno.co.uk Kirsti Bohata works at Swansea University. She is editing the diaries and completing a book on Amy Dillwyn's life and literature.

National Coming Out Day is celebrated in the UK on 12 October (US: 11 October) and commemorates the anniversary of an American national LGBT march on Washington in 1987. But do we actually need a Coming Out Day? Does it not put pressure on people who, for instance, are not ready to come out or who might be in a situation where it would actually be unsafe?

"A specific coming out day will certainly be helpful to some, in terms of being more open about their experiences with family, friends or colleagues," says psychologist Meg John Barker. "But on the downside, a day like that can put pressure on people because they can easily take it to mean that it is somehow better to be out, or that they should come out."

Coming out is obviously made easier (or otherwise), depending on your age-group, home locality, whether one is gay, bi or trans, or perhaps part of a conservative religious community. "It's vital to remember that we don't have a level playing field here and that it's a lot more difficult – and even dangerous – in different situations. In some communities and workplaces it's far more risky than it is in others," states Meg John.

COMING OUT IS ONE OF THE RITUALS OF LGBT LIFE. BUT SHOULD WE FEEL WE HAVE TO, ASKS KATRINA ALLEN

"Coming Out Day exists to celebrate the ability to live openly as an LGBT person"

Of course, coming out is rarely a one-off event but rather something most people do many times over during their lives, whether it be to new people or as different things, eg as bi and then as gay or vice versa, or as gay and then as trans. We all first come out to ourselves, accepting our own orientation before disclosing it to others, and there is frequently a long gap, often years, between the two experiences.

It can also often be far harder coming out as bi than as gay since, as Meg John explains: "[Bi people] know that they will be discriminated against by both straight and LG communities, and that there will be very few role models. They are also likely to be re-closeted by friends and family who assume their sexuality on the basis of the gender of their current partner".

An important factor in helping people to come out are celebrity role models. "Celebrities can be the people we look to most, be it for inspiration or similarities. And the way in which the media and public responds to a celebrity's action can really resonate with individuals," says Matt Horwood at Stonewall. He adds: "LGBT celebrities with multiple identities can effect an even bigger change. When Laverne Cox

first rose to stardom, many black trans women saw someone in the media they could relate to. This was a pivotal moment for many trans women who felt ostracised by the often transphobic media and general public."

As for Coming Out Day, Horwood believes the day exists to celebrate the ability to live openly and freely as an LGBT person. "Rather than pressuring people to come out," he explains, "it's a great opportunity for LGBT people and their allies to send a message to those who either aren't yet out or are still struggling with being so. It also allows allies to celebrate their LGBT friends, families and colleagues."

Finally, on the subject of whether coming out can help change the political landscape for LGBT people in Britain, he notes that, "passion, determination and resilience are just some of the attributes that have helped LGBT people effect legal change over the last 25 years. By no means would everyone involved in that struggle have identified as LGBT themselves".

So as we celebrate ourselves, let's not forget the huge part those LGBT allies have played in helping us. **D**

@katrinaallen21

Are you coming out?
OCT 12

1

Don't feel pressured.

One of the most important things to consider is whether or not you feel ready. Coming out is different for everybody and you'll know when the time is right for you.

2

Know that you're protected.

Stonewall works with employers, schools and universities to ensure that LGBT individuals are understood, protected and supported.

3

Know you're not alone.

There are networks and community groups across the country where you can meet and talk to other people like you.

6

Finally, don't be afraid to be who you are.

Because who you are is amazing!

How to come out

TIPS FROM STONEWALL. stonewall.org.uk

5

Give people time, including yourself.

Coming out can be daunting but ultimately, incredibly liberating. Almost all people we've spoken to say that their lives improved after coming out. Give yourself and those you come out to time – and always talk to a circle of friends and family who you trust.

4

If you feel you need support, ask for it.

You can reach out to Stonewall directly for advice or resources on 0800 050 2020.

How I came out...

“ I knew I was different from the age of about five, but I couldn't put my finger on it. And then, when I did realise, I suppressed it because I knew my dad would never accept it. When he died, I was 32, which is when I came out and started cross-dressing. I finally had my op in 2003.

I lost a few people in the beginning and don't hear from some sides of the family but my friends now are fabulous and ok being seen with me. I don't need to come out. I'm 6'8" with size 11 feet and a husky voice so it's pretty obvious. I walk through town with blinkers on, look straight ahead. When I get called names I try not to retaliate. But coming out to myself and taking the plunge is the best thing I ever did.”



Tanya, 54, trans woman

“ When did I come out to myself? I'm not really sure but I know I used to fancy men with long hair! I got married when I was 32 and my first time with a woman was at 38. I just thought it was an individual thing, that we were made for one another, so the penny didn't drop. Initially, I assumed I was bisexual but then, looking back, the whole emotional aspect was missing with a bloke. Later, I got involved with another woman and then I realised the first one wasn't a flash in the pan, which was when I realised I was actually gay. I'm not out at work and no-one's asked the question but I think the woman I share an office with is gay and I haven't asked her out in case she isn't. It makes me feel like a coward and I'm a bit ashamed about it. But in all other aspects of my life I am open.”

Jill, 60, lesbian

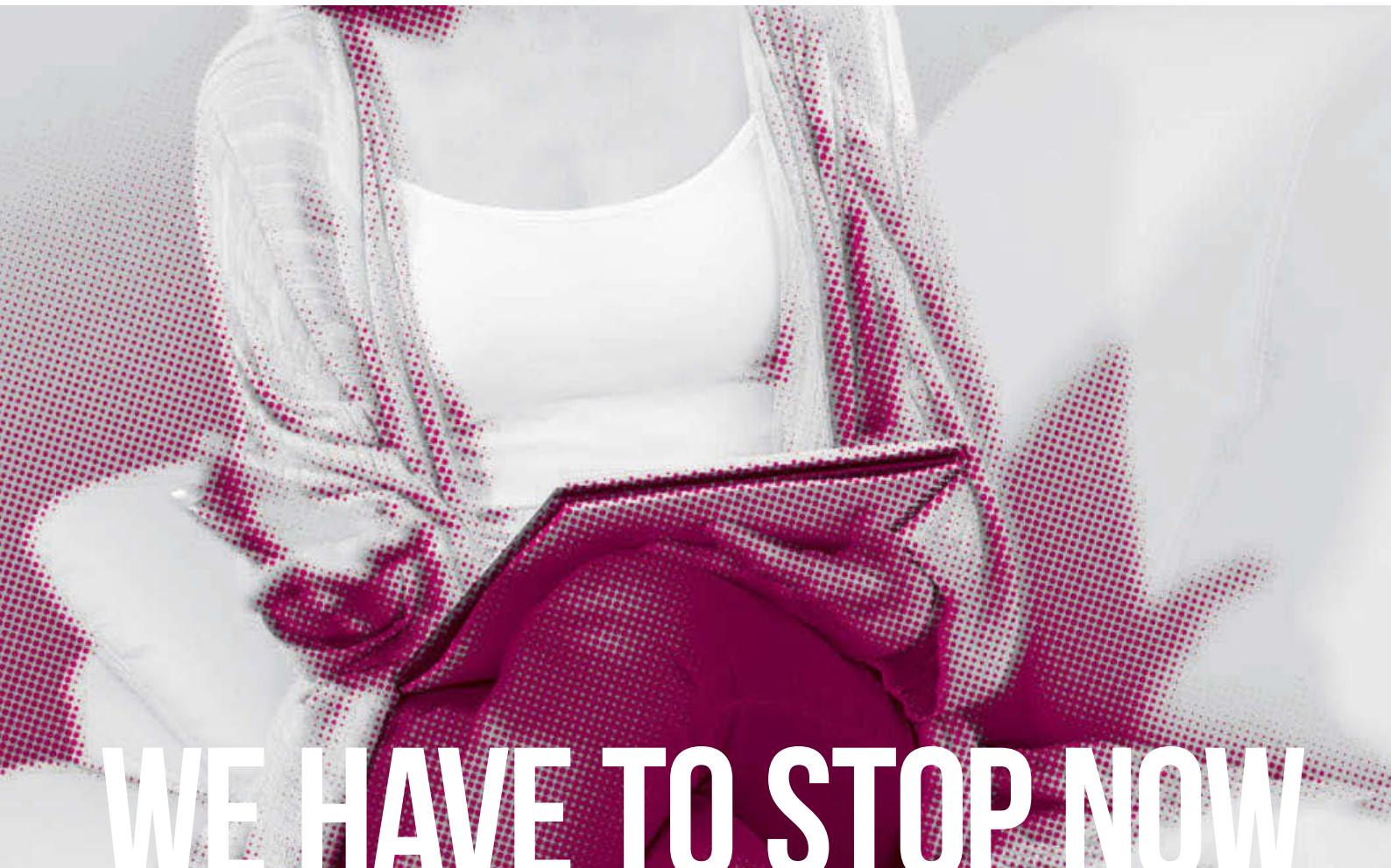
“ I had two long-term relationships with guys between the ages of 18 and 40 and then one with a woman immediately after. I had no idea of bisexuality until then. I was also her first girlfriend so we rather leapt into it together. I was heavily involved with the church at the time and the first person I came out to was my vicar and he was lovely so I was very lucky in that respect. I probably lean more towards women though I know it would make my life easier being with a guy. I'm very guarded about coming out to new people and gauge their reactions quite carefully. I'm often closed about it because there's a lot of bi-erasure around. A lot of people can't cope with not being able to put you in a perfect little box. I think some people think we're greedy or just downright confused. Not coming out isn't just cowardice. It's far more complicated than that.”

Jane, 48, bisexual



“ I came out when I was about 24. It was on my bucket list to have a lesbian relationship but I didn't think I was gay. After I finally did have the 'lesbian experience', the girl started texting me. I told her I was straight so I didn't know what I could offer her. But then I started going on dates with more girls and realised, that I wasn't sexually attracted to men. Now I'd identify as a gay woman. I've never experienced homophobia but then I live in east London where coming out is fashionable now. For a while, I went out with a girl who is Bangladeshi Muslim and coming out was probably the worst thing she had to do in her life. She was chucked out by her family, lived on the street, was dumped by all her friends. She lost everything. The difference between us was the people around us, not the act itself. She is now back in touch with her mum but it took years.”

Viv, 28, lesbian



WE HAVE TO STOP NOW

I've been on many internet dates. I do it for the two reasons anybody ever does it: because I'm lonely and I'm horny. Oh, and I want to find true love, obviously.

For date number 67 or so, I'd arranged to meet Kate at an art exhibition – Egon Schiele's *The Radical Nude*. There's nothing like a detailed painting of labia to get a first date going. As we were heading in, she said: "My therapist says this is a good exhibition." I laughed, admiring the boldness of the statement, which let me know she had a therapist, but in a light-hearted way. "I don't know if my therapist is into art," I replied, "but I know she likes David Lynch films."

The date went well; after we'd admired a number of nipples and discussed the use of the term "vulva", we went to the cafe for tea and cake. We shared a slice of lemon drizzle cake and compared internet dating stories. I told her some good stuff, some bad stuff and about the woman who kissed

ALICE SANDERS WANTS A DATE – WITH SOME ONE WHO DOESN'T KNOW HER THERAPIST

her dogs on the mouth. Then I asked how her internet dating experience had been.

At this point I should say that on her profile it states that she's into kink, or BDSM. I'm not a kinkster myself, but I'm very open-minded, lonely, and horny. She explained she'd been on a lot of dates where she'd been grilled about kink. It had become a kind of groundhog date for her. I pointed out that it was an interesting lifestyle choice. "My therapist is into BDSM," I told her. I'd Googled my therapist about a year previously. I found it odd that she knew so much about me, yet I knew hardly anything about her. When I found out she was into BDSM, I felt compelled to bring it up in my next session. "Oh, my therapist's into BDSM as well," Kate replied, casually.

In the fruit machine of my mind, three slices of melon lined up. "Where do you go to therapy?" I asked.

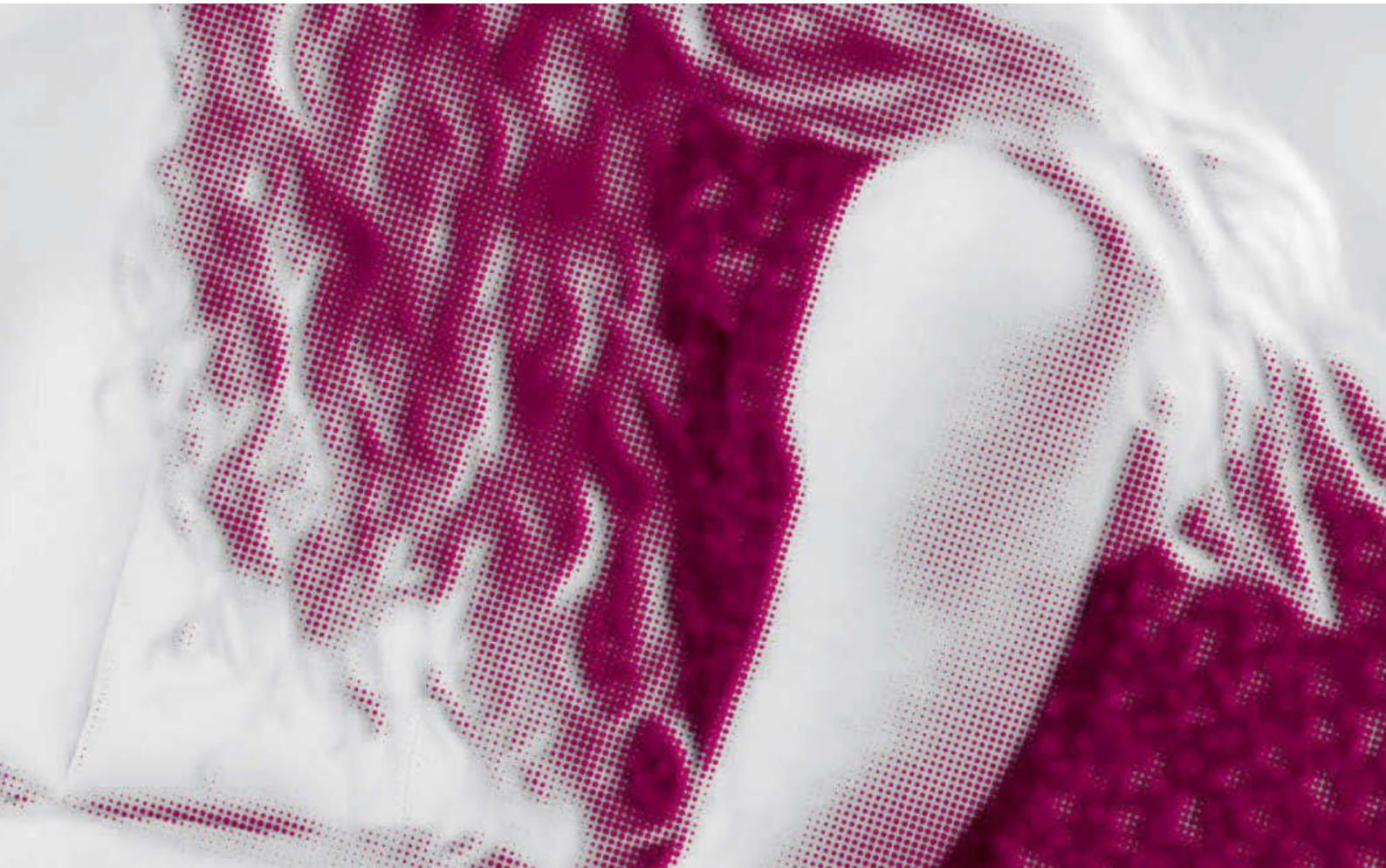
"North London," she answered.

My voice became hollow and high. "Is your therapist's name Lynne?"

"Yes," she replied, as if this was a perfectly fucking ordinary course of events.

I gripped the table hard. "I'm kind of freaking out right now." I didn't see her again.

A few days later I had another date lined up, this time with pretty Joanna, who had a penchant for RuPaul's *Drag Race*. We'd chatted a lot about our favourite drag queen online (Alexis Mateo, season three) and I was excited to meet her. As we ate brunch at a cafe, she told me that she'd recently retrained as a therapist. I was impressed and told her that I was in therapy – always great first date chat, I find. She said that she had a lot of queer and kinky clients because she was queer and kinky, and that not all therapists were equipped to deal with those things. There still is, she explained, a lot of prejudice against kinky people as it was once classified



as a sexual pathology that needed to be cured.

"My therapist is kinky," I told her. "At first I thought Lynne must be a dom, because after a day of listening to other people's problems I can imagine you'd be in the mood to flagellate someone, but now I'm not so sure."

"Lynne?" Joanna said. "I know her. We're in a group of kinky therapists together. Last week she gave a really interesting seminar on medical..." I found myself gripping the table hard for the second time in one week. I didn't see her again, either.

You might think I was overreacting – so what if Kate and Joanna knew my therapist? But here's the scenario that was playing in my head during both of these moments, like a film on fast-forward: Kate/Joanna and I date for about six months, a year, maybe longer. It goes well at first, but it always goes well at first. After a while there are problems; we try to deal with them, but every time I'm in therapy talking

about my girlfriend, I'm wondering what she's told Lynne about me.

Behind the "That sounds hard's" and the "How does that make you feel's?", does my therapist think that I'm the unreasonable one? As time goes on, I feel like she doesn't believe what I say any more. She's on Kate/Joanna's side now, I know it. And when the inevitable break-up comes, not only do I lose my partner, my life as I know it, and maybe even a few friends, I also lose my therapist. I'm completely alone.

A therapist is a person that you pay to take care of your feelings, and they should be steadfastly in your corner. If you date someone with the same therapist as you, that therapist can't be in both of your corners at once – that's just physics. If your therapist is friends with your girlfriend, then she's bound to have some loyalty to her. And if you think this is an oppositional view of love, then welcome to the battlefield, young soldier. When Virgil wrote, "Love conquers all", he meant

If you both see the same therapist, that therapist can't be in both of your corners at once – that's just physics

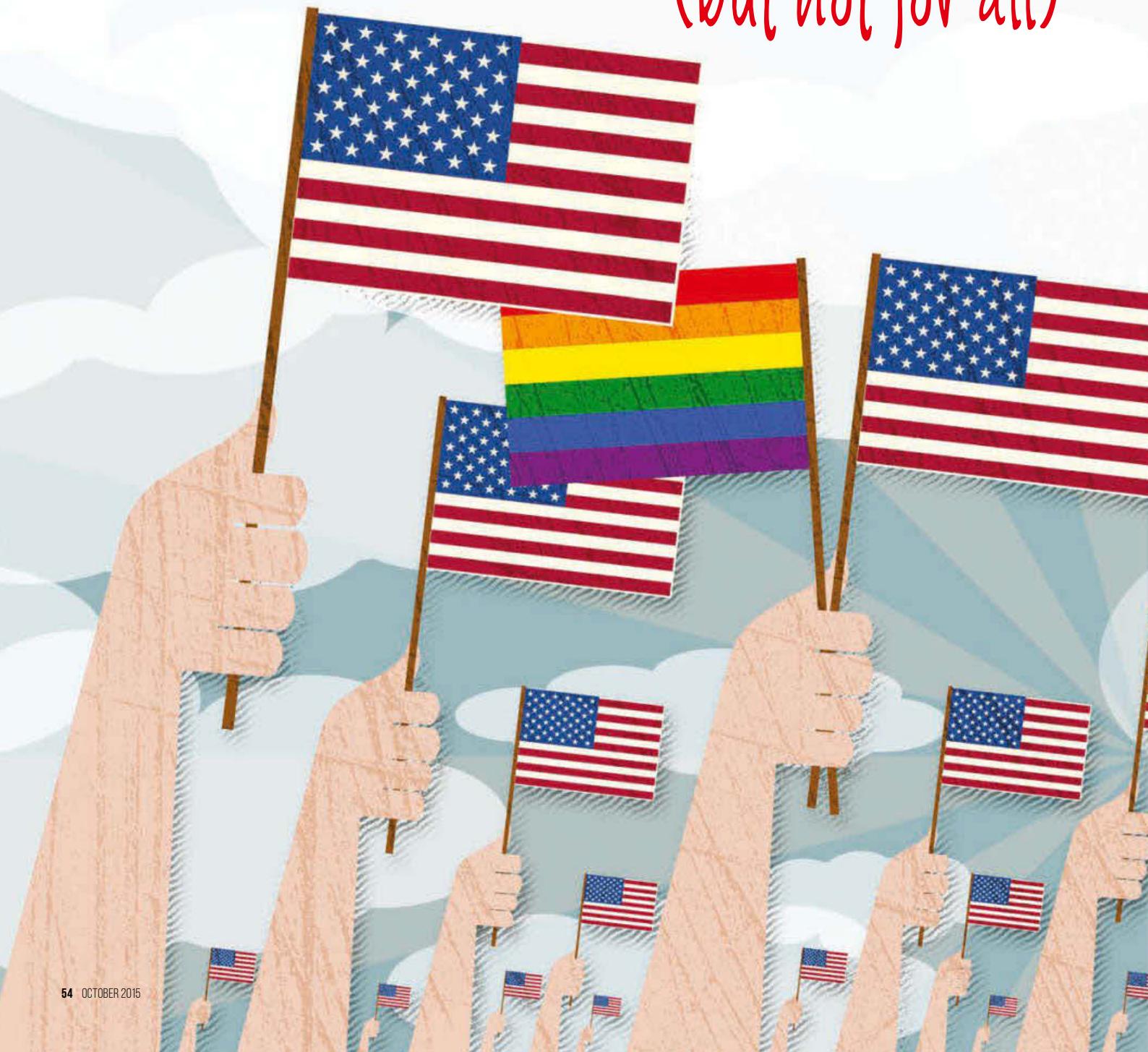
your self-esteem, your ability to feel anything except an aching chasm in your chest, and your entire sense of purpose – and that's when you're winning. Love is fucking war, literally. And if love is fucking war, then your therapist is your military strategist, and you don't want her in the other camp advising the enemy.

However lonely or horny I might be feeling, dating someone who knows my therapist is just too weird, too close for comfort, too icky. I haven't been back on any dating sites recently, because I'm afraid of meeting another woman who knows my therapist. Who will it be this time? Her best friend? Her ex-girlfriend? Her daughter?

I'm trying my best just to find a nice woman, but my life seems to always turn out a bit like a sit-com. I'd prefer it to turn out like rom-com, for once. After all, I'm just a girl, standing in front of the internet, asking for a date with a woman who doesn't know my therapist. 

EQUALITY

(but not for all)



It spawned the hashtag: #LoveWins! On 26 June, the Supreme Court of the United States – which decides on the constitutionality of laws passed by congress and individual states – issued a landmark civil rights ruling forcing all 50 states to allow same-sex marriage. Penning the majority opinion, Justice Anthony Kennedy declared of lesbian and gay couples: "They ask for equal dignity in the eyes of the law. The Constitution grants them that right". That same day, lesbian and gay couples lined up for marriage licenses across the remaining 13 Republican-controlled states that had held out against the rising tide of same-sex marriage recognition spreading across the rest of America.

The Supreme Court's vote in our favour had been widely anticipated since it had precedents. The court had already repealed two reviled pieces of anti-gay legislation that President Clinton had enacted during his two terms in the 1990s. The first, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell", which had barred gays from serving openly in the military, was overturned in 2010. Three years later, the court took a significant initial step towards marriage equality with its historic declaration that the "Defense of Marriage Act" (DOMA), which had defined marriage as being between a man and a woman, was unconstitutional.

DOMA's repeal in 2013 supercharged the marriage equality movement. Activists across the nation campaigned for legalisation at a state level and slowly, then steadily, one Democrat state after another began to sign same-sex marriage statutes into law. Miraculously, victories were even

won in some of the more socially-conservative Republican states like Wyoming, Oklahoma and Virginia.

But the patchwork quilt of marriage rights in certain parts of the country but not others became unworkable. If a lesbian couple from Seattle got married legally in liberal-leaning Washington state, but then relocated with work to New Orleans in conservative Louisiana where their union wasn't recognised, where did they stand legally? By 2015, same-sex marriage had become an untenable legislative mess that cried out for a nationwide norm to be established. So, on a sunny day this past summer, the Supreme Court did the right thing.

Judging by all the hoopla across social and mainstream media on the day of the ruling – 25 million Facebook users celebrated with a rainbow filter over their image – you might be forgiven for thinking that overnight all was suddenly tickety-boo for LGBT Americans.

But for many across the queer spectrum this latest Supreme Court ruling, momentous as it was, felt very much like a bittersweet victory.

For one thing, it was hard to feel gratitude towards a Supreme Court that, despite having thrown some generous bones to the gay community over the past five years, has during the same period savaged long-standing black civil rights legal protections and enabled corporations to become dangerously powerful. Black gay commentators could not but help juxtapose the same-sex marriage victory against the latest horrific act of racist terrorism that had taken place a few days prior, in which a white supremacist slaughtered nine black churchgoers in South Carolina. As one tweet doing the social media rounds simply asked: "Please can you legalise the right to be black?"

Equally frustrating – and the irony's not lost on us – was the fact that the inevitable backlash to #LoveWins! would be fueled courtesy of other recent landmark Supreme Court decisions.

Its 2010 vote to allow unlimited financing of political campaigns by corporations and wealthy individuals has corrupted the country's democracy to its core. Since the so-called "Citizens United" ruling, deep-pocketed, right-wing organisations have poured

untold millions of dollars into policy initiatives at local and state levels that either actively promote anti-gay legislation or fight non-discrimination measures.

THE RECENT US SUPREME COURT RULING IN FAVOUR OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE WAS HERALDED AS A DECISIVE VICTORY FOR GAY RIGHTS. BUT AMERICA'S LGBT COMMUNITY STILL LACKS EQUALITY IN MANY KEY AREAS

WORDS JUSTINE BUCHANAN

Much of that financing has homed in on the issue of religious freedom, a topic much debated by the Supreme Court of late. For example, in 2013, the court determined that family-run businesses had the right not to serve customers (read LGBT) whom they considered offensive to their personal religious beliefs. This came after various bakers across the country had been hauled into local courts after refusing to make wedding cakes for gay couples. Funding their defence were billionaire zealots hellbent on winning precedent-setting cases that halt the spread of gay rights. In this instance, they succeeded.

General disgust at the Supreme Court aside, other critical voices within our community questioned why the gay rights movement had expended so much energy fighting for such specific, and to some minds, conformist issues as gays in the military and same-sex marriage, when vast swathes of the country still enshrine an array of discriminatory laws that profoundly impact LGBT people's lives?

Though the general consensus concluded that yes, it's great that now we can all get married and enjoy the legal and financial protections that affords, let it not be forgotten that in many parts of the country we're still incredibly vulnerable in the workplace, the housing market, and in public spaces.

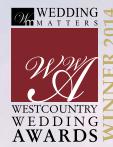
To give you an idea of the depth of inequality that still exists for LGBT Americans, here are a few sobering facts. In the majority of states in the US, as an LGBT person you have no legal protection if: your employer sacks you; a landlord refuses your rental application; a bank refuses you a loan; or if you are kicked out of a store or a restaurant. In addition, it is very difficult to foster or adopt American-born children, and many states don't recognise the assault or murder of queer people as a hate crime.

Sadly, it doesn't end there. For queer Americans that are not white, middle-class and gender-conforming, the more marginalised you are, the harder the struggle. If you're gay and black or Latino, you're more likely to wind up in poverty, imprisoned, or

In the majority of states in the US, as an LGBT person you have no legal protection if your employer sacks you

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murdered. Those probabilities increase exponentially if you're non-white and transgender. (See box below.)

Just stop for a moment and take that all in.

Is it any surprise critical gay commentators asked why did the right to marry and serve in the military, which benefit only a minority of our community, take precedence over everything and everyone else?

Many an accusatory finger pointed towards the Human Rights Campaign, the largest, most well-funded gay lobby group in America and driving force behind the three Supreme Court victories.

Critics see HRC as embodying the acceptable face of gay America to lawmakers in Washington, DC. They claim the organisation personifies the inevitable evolution of a grassroots gay rights movement started in the 1960s by radical feminists, and transgender and black activists. Forever headed by a clean-cut, white, male, cis leadership with corporate backgrounds and impeccable schooling, HRC is a bastion of privilege. With its black-tie, star-studded annual fundraising galas, the lobby group draws large donations from the educated, affluent, urban and predominantly white slice of gay America. Hence its most public campaigns have reflected the concerns of that demographic: preserve our assets from unfair inheritance taxes (via legalising marriage) and allow us to serve our country openly.

Critics also believe there's another reason HRC has achieved these three major victories: it doesn't cost government or corporations a dime to allow people to marry or serve in the military. Providing housing for homeless – predominantly queer teens – or complying with anti-gay discrimination in the workplace and housing does. Those are more difficult battles to fight and that's why HRC's avoided them, critics claim.

But to be fair to HRC, there's more to the picture. The organisation works tirelessly behind the scenes on many fronts and has won other notable victories, including the introduction of hate crime legislation in certain states, as well as the federal recognition of visitation and healthcare decision-making rights for LGBT people (which was necessary prior to the marriage equality ruling).

These are historic times in America. Backlash is inevitable

From a political strategy standpoint, it could be argued that forcing two key pillars of social acceptability – marriage and the armed forces – to embrace our difference was an effective opening salvo in a bigger push to implement more wide-reaching legal protections going forward.

If that was the strategy, it may very well be paying off. Just as the unworkability of being able to get married in some states but not others exposed injustice in that arena, now the fact that you can get married but still be vulnerable to losing your job and your home, and being denied a wedding cake, exposes the far broader array of protections that still need to be enshrined in law.

Building upon the momentum of the marriage equality victory, less than one month later Democrats moved to introduce a bill in Congress calling for a host of anti-discrimination protections. Entitled the Equality Act, the bill seeks to expand the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (which barred discrimination based on race or ethnicity) to include sexual orientation and gender identity. The law encompasses employment, housing, access to public places, federal funding, credit, education and jury service. And – critics please note – HRC is throwing its considerable weight behind the bill, too.

As of writing, the Equality Act's success is far from guaranteed since it requires a majority vote in the Senate and the House of Representatives. At present, Democrats are outnumbered by anti-gay Republicans in both. But it's an excellent start to what's probably going to be a long journey. Most likely, as with same-sex marriage, the Equality Act will be introduced by individual states until their growing number creates a critical mass at which point the legislation will be enforced nationwide.

Politics is a slow-moving machine and it may take years for the Equality Act, or a version thereof, to be enacted federally. In the meantime, activists continue the fight for transgender rights, for prison reform, for a livable minimum wage, for women to be able to control their bodies, for whites to stop slaughtering blacks with impunity. All of these struggles intersect with ours.

These are historic times in America. The apathy of the 90s and the 00s is dead. Americans are pissed off and

rightly so since there's so much wrong with their country. Today's generation is informed and media-savvy and out there demonstrating and demanding justice.

Backlashes are inevitable, on-going and well-financed. We must celebrate each victory as it is won then set our sights on the next battle. So, move over #LoveWins! There's a new hashtag in town: #EqualityForward! ☮

In America

DISCRIMINATION STILL ENSHRINED IN MANY STATES' LAWS:

- ★ You can be denied or even lose your job or home because of your sexual orientation or gender identity in well over half of America (31 states)
- ★ There's no legal protection for LGBT people refused entry or service in shops, restaurants, hotels, and banks across two thirds of the country (33 states).
- ★ Assaulting or murdering LGBT people is not classified a hate crime in the majority of states (35 in total)
- ★ Only seven states allow LGBT people to foster or adopt kids

LEGAL AND ECONOMIC STATISTICS FOR MINORITY LGBT AMERICANS:

- ★ Nine out of 10 LGBT murder victims are people of color; three quarters are trans women.
- ★ Non-white LGBT people have the highest rates of poverty of any group in the US. One quarter of American lesbians have incomes at the poverty level, while more than 60% of transgender blacks and Latinos live in extreme poverty, with annual incomes less than \$10,000 (£6,500).
- ★ Gay and transgender youth, especially if black or Latino, are up to three times more likely than their straight/white/cis peers to be arrested and detained by police.



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www.broadoakscountryhouse.co.uk/weddings/gay-weddings/



INTRODUCING FIND FEMMES

Find Femmes is a new niche dating site for feminine-identified lesbian and bi women to find love with other femmes, designed by YouTubers Wegan. We spoke to founders Whitney Bacon and Megan Evans to find out more.

DIVA: Where did the idea for Find Femmes come from?

WHITNEY: We got the idea from our fans. Over the years we were constantly asked by our followers, "How can I meet a femme?"

MEGAN: We know first-hand how hard it can be to find another feminine lesbian. We found it really hard to find love, and eventually managed to find one another online; on Myspace in fact! It just so happened we then had to do long distance between Hawaii and the UK!

WHITNEY: So we never really had an answer. There are gay bars but they're not everyone's scene, plus you never know if a feminine girl is there because she's LGBTQ, or she's just tagging along with her gay friends.

What kind of research did you do?

W: The research kind of came to us, from all the messages we got asking for this kind of service.

M: Of course we also looked into the dating sites that were out there, and drew from our own experience of using [them].

W: There are some great dating sites and apps out there, but we felt that we could fill a gap in the market.

How does Find Femmes differ from other lesbian and bisexual dating sites?

M: The aim of Find Femmes is to provide a community for feminine identified LGBTQ women. It's hard to be taken seriously as gay when you're a femme...

W: ...and that's in the straight and the gay communities!

M: We hope that people will find love through our site, and that as the community grows, so will femme visibility! Online and offline.

The site is obviously targeted at self-identified femmes. How will you make sure it is inclusive?

M: As much as it's a niche dating site and it's targeted at feminine identified LGBTQ women, we don't want to divide the lesbian community and we recognise that not all femmes also like femmes. So any woman who likes femmes can join.

What kind of feedback have you received so far?

M: Feedback has been great! We've had quite a few people say, "It's about time," or, "This is way overdue," though we also have negative feedback which is to be expected – and we've learned you can't please everyone.



Fresh femmes: Whitney and Megan

YOUTUBERS
WEGAN TELL
DIVA ABOUT
THEIR NEW
ONLINE
DATING SITE

What's been the best thing about this experience?

M: Seeing your dream come to life!

W: Knowing that we're playing a part in helping people find true love, because it was a gift we found one another – pure luck. So if we can do this for other people, then we feel we've certainly made a change to people's lives.

M: It's also great being able to create something and be passionate about it. We're really excited right now!

And the worst?

M: The late nights after working a full day at work!

W: Dealing with technical difficulties when it comes to the back-end of websites and coding. When you see an error 404 and don't know how to fix it!

Where do you see Find Femmes in five years time?

M: [We hope] that it continues to grow year on year and we're invited to a few fabulous femme weddings!

W: Yes, we can't wait to hear some success stories. We've already had a high uptake, so we can't wait to see where it leads to! The sky's the limit! ☀



Sign up now at findfemmes.com.

Wedding Daze

PLANNING A WEDDING? DIVA ROUNDS UP SOME OF THE MOST GORGEOUS PLACES TO GET MARRIED AND SPEND YOUR PERFECT HONEYMOON, AT HOME AND ABROAD. PLUS, READERS SHARE PICS OF THEIR OWN AMAZING WEDDINGS



READER PIC

Fiona and Jess Abbey wed at the Old Rectory in Handsworth, Sheffield. Their theme of floral designs and birds was captured perfectly by this beautiful birdcage cake.

PHOTO BY TAYLOR HUGHES PHOTOGRAPHY, TAYLORHUGHESPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

Romantic

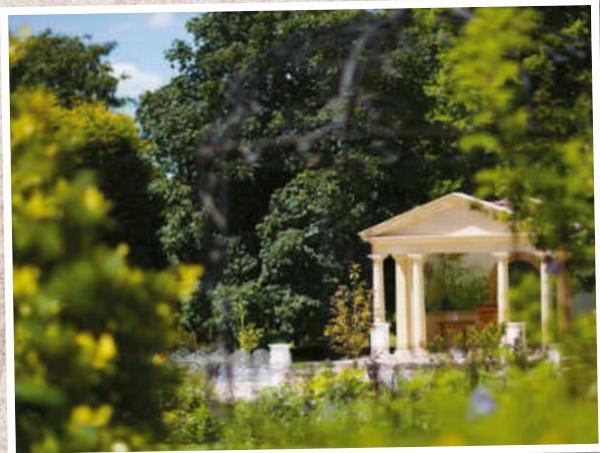
WEDDING VENUES



THE STAR INN, ALFRISTON

Weddings don't come any more romantic than this. Set in the picturesque village of Alfriston, the beautiful rose garden at the Star Inn is the perfect backdrop for the wedding you've always dreamt of. Fallen in love? They're giving one lucky couple the chance to win one of their bespoke packages to the value of £6,000. Closing date is 30 September, so be quick.

thestaralfriston.co.uk



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Surrounded by stunning Shropshire countryside, the Linden Belvedere at Rowton Castle makes the perfect venue for an outdoor ceremony. Licensed to hold up to 110 guests, there's plenty of room to roam the castle's grounds, which makes it ideal for couples who dream of getting married outdoors.

rowtoncastle.com

HONEYMOONS



LESBOS, GREECE

Where else is more romantic to relax after your big day than a Greek Island? Sappho's hometown Skala Eressos is the perfect destination to unwind and Kyma Hotel, located right on the sea front, is the ideal place to do it. This warm, intimate and friendly hotel has just 10 rooms, so you'll be guaranteed peace and quiet, and while it's simple, the gorgeous views will more than make up for that. Just a few minutes' walk from your room, you'll find serene beaches, castles to explore, scuba diving and much more.

lesvos.co.uk

VOUNI, CYPRUS

Get wrapped up in each other at this tranquil stone village house in Cyprus. With its own private pool, rustic surroundings and beautiful views, you won't want to leave. In the heart of the wine region, this secluded destination is just a 20-minute drive to the coast, and 30 minutes from the local nightlife.

furtherafield.com/vouni-hideaway-for-two-vouni-cyprus



PHUKET, THAILAND

Looking for paradise? We've found it. Nestled among stunning beaches and lush coconut groves, The Naka Island is an idyllic honeymoon destination in Thailand. Only 25 minutes from the airport in Phuket, this luxury resort is quickly reached, but can only be accessed from the mainland by speedboat making it feel incredibly private and intimate. Try a pool villa and fall in love with the stunning views over Phang Nga Bay, and feel a million miles from home on your own private beach.

nakaislandphuket.com

JOHN WILLIAMS AT G WEDDINGS DIRECTORY SHARES HIS TIPS FOR GETTING HitchED ABROAD

With so many hotels and wedding planners offering same-sex weddings abroad, now is a great time to take advantage of the wonderful opportunities for couples to get married somewhere other than Blighty.

With same-sex marriage legal in Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the United States and Uruguay, you could say the world is your oyster for a wedding abroad.

Perhaps you have a favorite country or holiday destination where you always dreamed of an intimate wedding? Research costs nothing so you could plan the whole thing yourself – go bold and adventurous with just you and a couple of your nearest and dearest or your pals from the pub.

For those wanting to put on more of a show, maybe a city wedding would be a good choice.

If your desires lie in a full formal affair to wow and amaze your family then perhaps a more romantic venue would be more your style...

Whatever you do, you will need to research the legality of the ceremony in your chosen country or destination.

Even though you are a same-sex couple and marriage is legal where you are planning your wedding, if you do not reside in your chosen country your wedding vows may have to be part of a dream "show ceremony", with the actual legal marriage taking place in the UK before you go to your destination.

My personal advice to couples looking to plan a wedding abroad, whatever kind of wedding you go for, would be to hire a local wedding planner. Wedding planners abroad will know all the legal ins and outs of getting married in your country of choice and you will also benefit from their contacts.

If you are working to a budget, most wedding

planners abroad these days will offer you a service for just the legal side of things, the ceremony and your paperwork.

Should you then want them to help you plan the whole celebration, they will also know the area, locals, vendors etc and will be focused on you and your big day.

You may need to pay an upfront fee to an independent wedding planner, for them to organise all the paperwork for you; fees should be fully outlined on websites.

With resort weddings, you will be offered the help of a wedding planner at the resort and these costs are usually included in the price you pay for your wedding.

Feel free to check out the venues and wedding planners on gweddingdirectory.com in our Weddings Abroad section.

John is available on 0800 335 7570 to answer your questions about getting married abroad.

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theknoll-lakeside.co.uk

WEDDING VENUES



OCEAN KAVE, DEVON

This coastal venue is ideal for a smaller wedding. Whether it's a cosy winter wedding or a beachy summer do, Ocean Kave can accommodate every desire and is a great choice for brides with big love and a short guest list as the venue won't swamp the party.

oceankave.co.uk

Intimate



READER PIC

Gemma and Emma Shaw married in Provincetown, Massachusetts, towards the end of a road trip that took them from LA to NYC. "We got married on the beach just out of town at dawn. There was just the two of us, the lady marrying us and the photographer. It was gorgeous and afterwards we went for breakfast in a local restaurant and had blueberry pancakes."

PHOTO BY GREGG PETERSON,
STUDIO GREGG PHOTOGRAPHY



HONEYMOON

THE SECRET GARDEN VILLA, AMALFI COAST

This stylish villa for two makes a great place to escape to with your loved one. Situated atop a rocky ledge on the Amalfi coast, the location is hard to beat. With no cars, a handful of restaurants and just one grocery store, Nocelle is the perfect place to relax and fall even more in love. And how can you say no to that view?

furtherafield.com/the-secret-garden-positano-amalfi-coast-italy



WEDDING VENUE

THE PRINCE ALBERT, CAMDEN

If you're looking for a chilled vibe for your city wedding, the Prince Albert is the venue for you. The staff here can lend a helping hand in selecting wine, picking a DJ, planning the menu and much more. An added bonus is that they're also now licensed to host marriages too!

princealbertcamden.com



READER PIC

Yasmin and Heather McLaggan married at Islington Town Hall, followed by an amazing reception lunch at Vintage Salt (a fish and chip shop!). "It was truly an incredible day, full to the brim with love and laughter and a lot of tears!" says Yasmin. "We dedicated it to Stonewall; we made a donation to them instead of favours, and bought all our guests Stonewall badges which they wore all day."

PHOTO BY FRANK RÖHRIG, FRANKRÖHRIG.COM

Urban

HONEYMOONS



BRIGHTON, UK

If you're looking for a honeymoon that is cooler than cool, you won't go wrong with Artist Residence in Brighton. This gorgeous 23-bedroom townhouse will steal your heart, and if the stunning sea views across the West Pier don't do it for you, its two restaurants, cocktail bar and ping-pong room definitely will. You're going to want to stay forever...

artistresidencebrighton.co.uk

DUANE STREET HOTEL, NEW YORK

A boutique hotel in the heart of Tribeca, the Duane Street Hotel can't get much more urban. Just a short walk from some of New York's most fashionable restaurants and galleries, Tribeca has it all. With so much to see and explore, you'll never be struggling for something to do.

furtherafield.com/duane-street-hotel-tribeca-new-york

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

One of Australia's most LGBT-friendly cities, Sydney has loads to offer as a honeymoon destination. Hit the sand at one of the city's famous beaches or sample urban kicks and culture, including the famous Mardi Gras parade (5 March 2016). For a sexy honeymoon stay, try the camp-as-Christmas five-star QT Sydney hotel.

qtsydney.com.au

HONEYMOONS



WEDDING VENUE

BROADOAKS COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL

Why not escape to this stunning setting when converting your civil partnership to a marriage? Enjoy a low-key ceremony and treat yourselves to a relaxing break à deux, or go all out and have another ceremony. Optional afternoon tea, late checkout and spa access make your stay that little bit more special.

broadoakscountryhouse.co.uk

Escape



READER PIC

When Maggie Kinsella and Catriona Cavanagh tied the knot, they gave all their friends and family a big day out, choosing Clanard Court Hotel in Athy, County Kildare for their celebration. Pictured sneaking a moment away from the crowd, the happy couple say it was a day they'll remember forever.

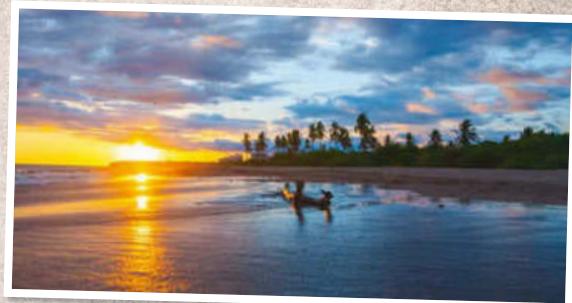
PHOTO BY JER AND ANITA GIBBONS, GIBBONSPHOTOGRAPHY.IE



AN AIRIGH, SCOTLAND

Get close to nature at this stunning architect-designed dwelling for two in the crofting community of An Airigh on the Isle of Skye. Surrounded with wildlife, this really is the place to escape to. If you go during the winter, you'll even be able to see the Northern Lights!

furtherafield.com/an-airigh-isle-of-skye-scotland



PUERTO VALLARTA, MEXICO

Friendly and laid-back, Puerto Vallarta on Mexico's Pacific coast is famous for its beaches, water sports and nightlife. Enjoy whale-watching, dolphin and turtle tours or explore the town's history. For a real honeymoon treat, go all-inclusive at the luxurious Hilton Puerto Vallarta Resort.

hilton.com



MIAMI AND THE FLORIDA KEYS

With its private pool, sun deck and lush vegetation Alexander's in Key West – also known as Paradise – is a destination hotel exclusively for LGBT holiday-makers. Whether it's a wedding or honeymoon or both, the friendly staff and on-site wedding department will help you to make your honeymoon so perfect you'll never want to leave.

alexanderskeywest.com



READER PIC

Anna and Jo Taylor-Morton married on Lusty Glaze beach in Cornwall and say, "With a private sandy cove, theatrical dresses, moody rain clouds, and surfboards at sea, we had the day of our dreams!" Their amazing photographer even joined them with a waterproof camera in the waves!

PHOTO BY JENNY RUTTERFORD PHOTOGRAPHY, JENNYRUTTERFORD.COM



CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

Spoil yourselves at the spa at the Bay Hotel and their sister hotel Camps Bay Retreat, recommended by DIVA reader Kate Stevens and on the seafront of one of the most beautiful beaches in Cape Town. Take them up on their special honeymoon massages, enjoy a romantic walk on the beach, toast the sunset with a cocktail and relax.

thebay.co.za



HONEYMOONS



LAPLAND, SWEDEN

Honeymoon in style with this unique hotel, where you get "tree for two"! With loads of activities on offer, including snowboarding and dog-sledding, and the opportunity to view the Northern Lights, this really is a unique getaway.

furtherafield.com/the-tree-hotel-lapland-sweden



WEDDING VENUE

ICEHOTEL, SWEDISH LAPLAND

There are few cooler wedding venues than Icehotel – and we're not just talking temperatures. Set in Swedish Lapland, 200km north of the Arctic Circle, there can't be many experiences more magical than saying "I do" in the Ice Church under the glow of the Northern Lights. Adventurous couples can spend the morning ice fishing or exploring the Arctic forests by dog sled or snow mobile. And even if you're too tired for hanky panky, your wedding night will still be unforgettable – with nothing more than woolly socks, reindeer skins and your love for one another keeping you warm in the icy splendor of the hotel. If you're chilly just thinking about it, try a somewhat cosier summer wedding! The midnight sun is a sight to behold.

icehotel.com



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CONTENT

More information on p5
divadigital.co.uk





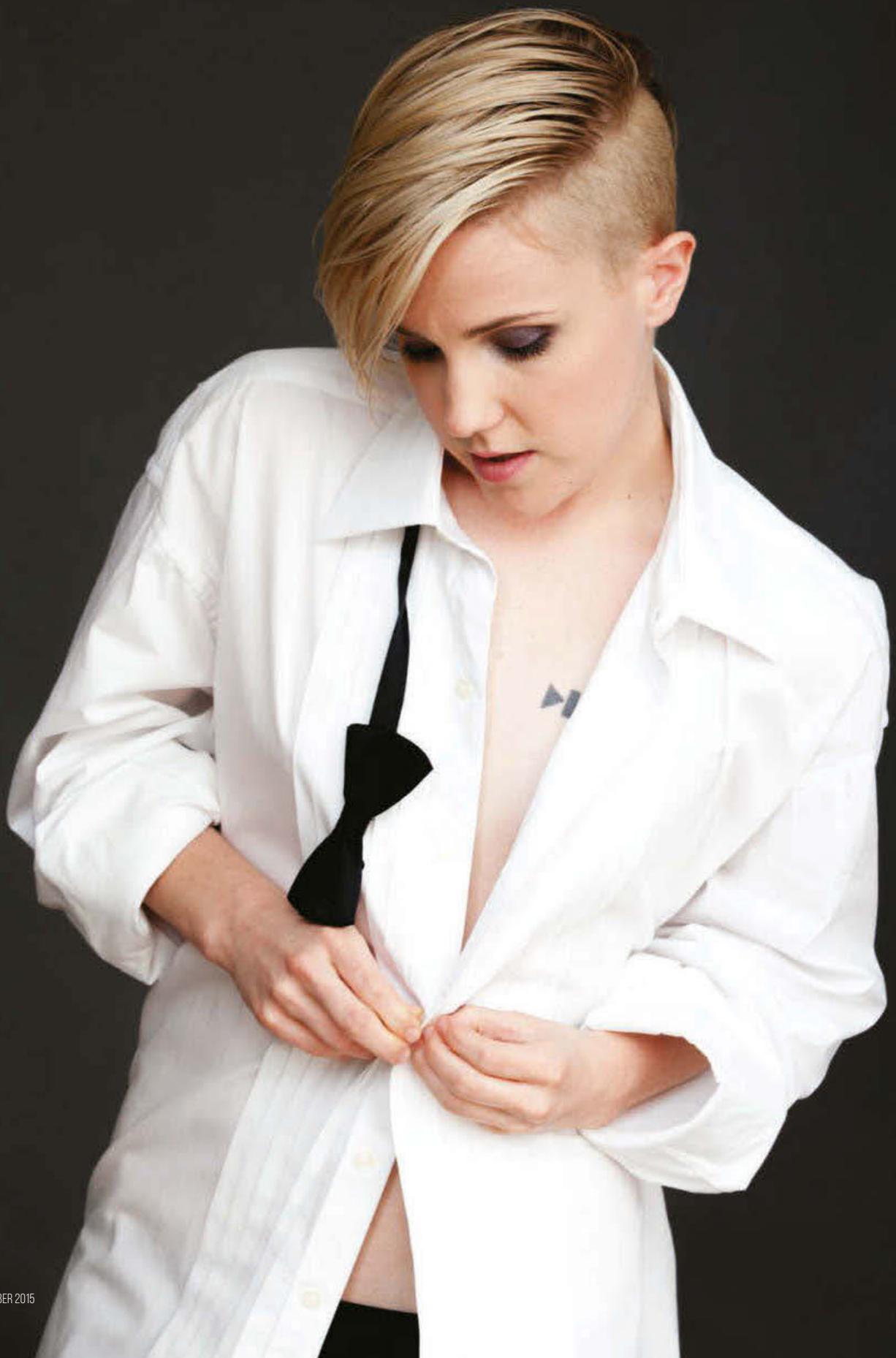
The secret side of Hannah Hart

PHOTOS
KHAREN HILL
HAIR + MAKE-UP
KERRIE URBAN

A SUPER MEGA STAR
THANKS TO HER
YOUTUBE SHOW, MY
DRUNK KITCHEN, A
SOBER HANNAH HART
TALKS TO CARRIE LYELL
ABOUT ACCIDENTAL
FAME, STAYING
GROUNDED AND LIFE
BEYOND THE INTERNET

T

he star of *My Drunk Kitchen* is stone cold sober when we call for a chat. It is 9.30am in Los Angeles though, so if she weren't, that might be a cause for concern. For someone who says they're not "much of a drinker", is it weird to be famous for being inebriated? "Yeah, it is, to be totally honest," she admits. But then, being famous wasn't exactly something that was planned. ▶



An accidental celebrity, 28-year-old Berkeley graduate Hannah Hart found fame a surprise to say the least. Having recently moved from San Francisco to New York to pursue a career in translation, she made a video for a friend back home and uploaded it to YouTube. "Then I discovered that YouTube was actually a place where people went to view content. Not just a service you use to send a video," she laughs. Overnight, the comments section underneath what would become the first episode of MDK "blew up". "People were like, 'This is my new favourite show on YouTube!' and I was like, 'Show on YouTube? What are they talking about?' It was then I realised there was this entire underground ecosystem of entertainers and content creators living inside this world I had no idea was there."

While she says that kind of overnight fame wasn't overwhelming as such – "The idea of a viral video is really kind of a myth" – celebrity is an odd concept she's still getting her head around, four years later. "It's a little bit weird, to become a famous person," Hannah admits. "I can't say it's the most natural feeling in the world but I don't think it should be, either." But having her face splashed across billboards hasn't put her off, and down-to-earth Hannah has found a way to navigate the trials and tribulations of fame because she sees it as the pay-off for doing something she's passionate about. "I love what I do. I love engaging with people. I love creating content that they enjoy. Might that change one day? Maybe, yeah. But for now it feels like it's kind of the way it works."

It might have come as a surprise, but maintaining the Harto brand has been anything but accidental. What's her recipe for success? "It's nothing sexy," she concedes. "It's just hard work and consistency. Being open to risk and making yourself vulnerable and staying with it." Luckily, this girl is nothing if not driven. She spent this morning editing an episode of MDK and once she gets off this call with me, she begins promoting that one while filming another three. "I'm hoping for

a shower at some point!" she laughs. It can't be easy to keep going though, without somewhere there to crack the whip? "If I don't have someone holding me accountable, I will lay in bed staring at the ceiling, for hours and hours and hours and hours," Hannah says, making me feel somewhat better about my own lack of motivation. "But I do have a boss, and that's the people who watch my channel. They refer to themselves as 'Hartosexuals' and they're the people who've had faith and believed in me and believed in what we're trying to build since day one."

MDK isn't unique. As YouTube grows, more and more people are chasing the viral dream, redefining celebrity and making Hannah and her peers more famous than actors and musicians. And with many channels having more subscribers than some of the most popular shows on the box, is YouTube killing TV? "I don't know. Did TV kill radio? Did movies kill theatre?" a sombre Hannah muses. "They all still exist. I just think the way people consume media is evolving, just as the way people communicate with each other is evolving. Your grandparents might have a hard time adapting to texting, but does that mean texting... killed phone calls?"

Ok, so while it might not have killed TV, YouTube is certainly keeping it on its toes, and that's something Hannah is grateful for. "Without YouTube becoming popular, I'm not too sure shows on Amazon or Netflix, like Orange Is The New Black or Transparent, would have been made. YouTube taught people to consume video online. It used to be 80% of online video consumed was on YouTube and now there's all these other players who've realised the value of original creation and distribution. And I'm so happy about that. It kind of gets rid of the idea that we have to appeal to the lowest common denominator to make entertainment."

Indeed, while YouTube is definitely forcing TV to up its game, the box in the corner of the room is still lacking in many areas – which is why YouTube continues to grow in popularity while TV audiences shrink. Particularly

among young people from marginalised communities who up until now haven't seen themselves represented on TV.

Be it web series, coming outs or advice videos, YouTube is a bubbling online metropolis for queer people across the globe, and in 2012, Hannah put down the kitchen utensils and uploaded her own emotionally-charged coming out story, which has well over a million views. Why? She pauses. "I was starting this new life and I wanted to start it with no secrets," she says quietly. "It took me a really long time to come out. And I didn't want to build this new life with anything hanging over my head. I didn't want to think to myself, 'Well, one day I'm going to have to come out.'"

But is there still value in a big public coming out, in the #LoveWins, no labels era? Certainly, celebs like Kristen Stewart have balked at the idea of making a statement on your sexuality. For Hannah, though, it's really important. "There's been a weird coming out backlash lately, of people being like, 'Oh, everyone's doing coming out videos, blah blah blah. Why?' And it's like, fuck you. Whatever. It's not for you. Yeah sure, if you live in a liberal, privileged area where gay people are so readily accepted and it's not even on your radar? Yeah dude, totally. You're probably not concerned with this. But you know what? A lot of the kids that are consuming this content live in the country. They don't have gay people in their towns."

She's got a point. These days, many of us tend to think of coming out as no harder than pulling off a plaster. But for Hannah, who grew up in a very religious environment, that journey to acceptance was anything but easy. Is faith still an important part of her life now? "I grew up really, really Christian but having seen so much of the world and heard so many different people's experiences, I think that faith and spirituality and soulfulness are really important. Organised religion? Not so much." It's obviously been a long road for her, and the emotional scars are clearly evident, but Hannah remains ►

"I do have a boss, and that's the people who watch my channel. They believe in me"

resilient and optimistic that we're moving towards a more tolerant and accepting society.

Cool and confident, you'd never guess that Hannah had such a tough time coming out, or that she's battled anxiety and insecurity. But while she's dealt with those demons, there are others she hasn't quite managed to tame yet. And despite the subject matter of many of her videos being intensely personal, there are still things that are difficult to share.

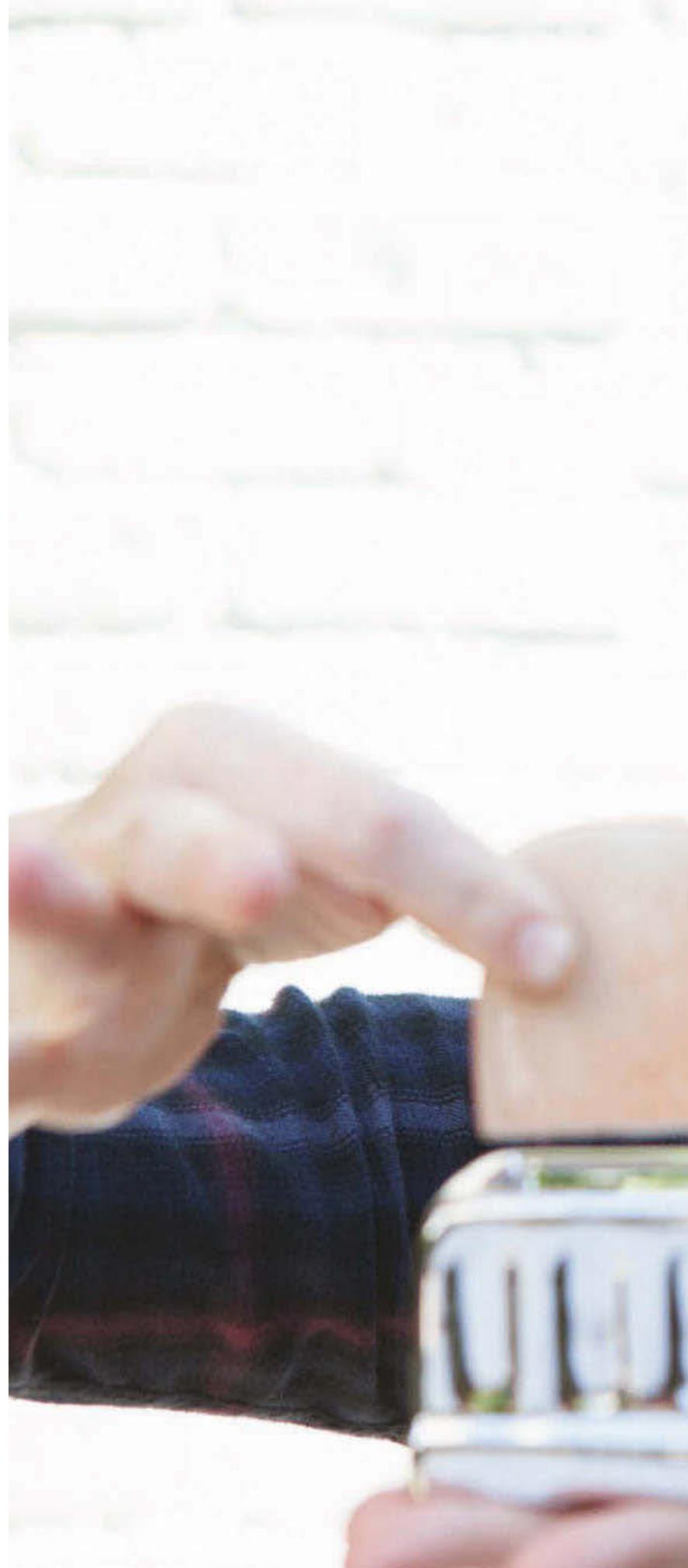
"I haven't figured out how to talk about my mom being schizophrenic," Hannah says. "I have to figure out how to talk about that. It's not that it's too personal to share, it's that I haven't figured out how I want to say what I want to say, what I hope to get accomplished by sharing it. You know what I mean? That's it. Coming out – I want to accomplish that people have more out public gay figures. Or talking about being insecure – I know people are insecure out there. I want to accomplish letting them know that even though I look so fancy and ting, I'm insecure too. But with mental health stuff, it's really hard to talk about. Not just because of stigma, but also it's a pretty powerless situation. There's not really a happy ending."

It's something I know all too well. My mum is bipolar, and, like Hannah and thousands of others who either have mental health issues or love someone who does, it's something I struggle to talk about. If or when she gets around to making that video, I have a feeling it will be profoundly important and resonate with many people. "I hope so," says Hannah. "I hope to have a profound and resonate experience with it someday, and not just constant guilt."

Hannah Hart is unlike anyone I've interviewed before. While many of the celebs I've met have been absolutely lovely people, others have been the epitome of vain. But for Hannah, this isn't about ego or money in the bank, but an overarching quest for kindness. "I guess the more I've been given, the more opportunity I've had, I try to channel that into gratitude. Because otherwise you're just wasting your time, and you're turning into a little shit," she laughs.

But how do you keep your feet on the ground when you're living a day-dream and you've met everyone from ▶

"I want to let people know that even though I look so fancy, I'm insecure too. Mental health is hard to talk about"







Whoopi Goldberg to Barack Obama? "My sister is real big on mindfulness and so we try and be – we have a sibling that killed themselves – and so we try and not get there. Effectively, that helps demystify fame because that's not life or death. Material things have never been my motivator. People have always motivated me, relationships have always motivated me, growth has always motivated me. Fame falls under the category of just a material thing. So it's kind of easy to stay grounded when it's not so tempting."

Her attitude is so refreshing, and it's clear from speaking to her that if it was all gone tomorrow, she would find a way without any problem. But even celebrities need someone to love. Is there a special lady in her life? I can almost see her trademark grin beaming down the phone line. "There is someone special in my life right now, which is just really wonderful. You know how they say, 'When you know, you know?' And it's like, bullshit. Nobody knows when they know, it's a struggle! At least that's how I've always felt about that. Until I got to a point in my relationship with myself that when I met someone who was a great fit for the real me? It wa

So who is the lucky lady? Is it anyone we know? "Well, she's also a YouTuber. We've actually been friends for a couple of years, and then... circumstances kind of aligned. Her name is Ingrid and she is a big YouTuber. But she's also just one of the most brilliant, soulful people I've ever met. It's so good. Because she hates LA too but we both have to live [here] so at least there's somebody else that gets it. My friends and family who know me get kind of all the stuff we've been talking about, about staying grounded and having a perspective, but not a lot of other people who are my peers feel that as you mentioned. Right? So to have a peer who is my partner, who does what I do and gets this world, this world that we live in but also gets the world inside ourselves? Oh my god. I couldn't be happier" **D**

Hannah Hart stars alongside fellow YouTuber Grace Helbig in *Electra Woman And Dyna Girl*, which hits the US later this year.

"Material things have never been my motivator. Fame is just a material thing. So it's kind of easy to stay grounded when it's not so tempting"

THE HART OF THE MATTER...

WHAT'S THE WORST INJURY YOU'VE SUSTAINED COOKING WHILE DRUNK?

Oh jeez, I burn myself all the time. My forearms are absolutely covered in burns. Every injury is one I wish I hadn't sustained! I don't like getting hurt.

WHICH CELEBRITY WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO MEET?

I really wanna meet Patrick Stewart from Star Trek! Oh, or Beyoncé. Or Oprah.

WHAT'S THE CRAZIEST THING YOU'VE DONE FOR A GIRL?

One time in college, instead of using the money I had been saving for this trip to Japan, I saved it so that when I got back, I could buy a car because I knew this girl needed rides.

TELL US A SECRET.

Can I tell you guys the secret? How about... the secret is there is no... I want to say something nice, like happiness comes from within or something like that but not so trite, you know what I mean? The secret is... that optimism is a choice and the power to be positive is yours to make! Something like that. I got nothing. [Laughs]





MAKE YOUR WAY DOWN TO
BRIGHTON'S QUEER PLAYGROUND FOR
AN UNFORGETTABLE NIGHT OUT

Brighton's new(ish) and most unusual queer night, Traumfrau runs monthly at a different venue each time. From outdoor festival-like parties with fire pits, a pool and food, to club nights, performances, and great DJs, no two Traumfrau parties are the same. Step into a colourful alternative reality and dance until the late hours, watch twisted drag acts and incredible performers, paint a gigantic unicorn, print a shirt, play a game, dance some more and meet the most incredible people. Want more? Just ask. Your wish is their command. 

traumfrau.co.uk







ADDITIONAL
DIGITAL
CONTENT

More information on p5
divadigital.co.uk



Stockholm's GOT GAME

BELLA QVIST
REVISITS
HER OLD
HOMETOWN
FOR THE
EUROGAMES
– AND FALLS
IN LOVE WITH
THE SWEDISH
CAPITAL AGAIN

Stockholm is my favourite city in the entire world; I used to live there and I dream of moving back but I rarely get chance to explore the LGBT scene. So when my girlfriend Cyd and I arrive in the Swedish capital for EuroGames it is with fresh eyes that I discover sapphic Stockholm – and boi, have I been missing out.

I haven't even left the UK when it becomes obvious that we're heading to EuroGames. Waiting for the SAS Stockholm flight at Manchester Airport Cyd points out that we are surrounded by queer women – and it's no wonder. Five thousand LGBT-friendly participants from 71 nations are due to arrive in the Swedish capital to compete in 27 sporting events during four very hot summer days.

Once in Stockholm the vibe remains distinctly queer. Buses are flying Pride flags, buildings are lit up with rainbow lights glistening in the water surrounding the city's 14 islands and everywhere we go I see gay couples holding hands.



A weeklong Pride celebration has just come to an end and many visitors have stuck around for EuroGames, the all-welcoming sports event founded by the European Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation in 1992.

Combatting discrimination in sport, politics and culture, Stockholm is hosting the fifteenth edition of EuroGames and at the opening flag ceremony the 165 teams, coming from countries like Russia, France and Thailand, are oozing with pride. However, it soon becomes obvious that the organisers have made mistakes. Cancelled events, poor communications and a last-minute approach see participants take to social media, branding it the worst EuroGames ever. The coordinators face tough criticism, and in part rightly so, but as I pop along to the different events I also find a great sense of community spirit – and fun. Both concepts that remain at the heart of the games.

At Stockholm Stadium's track and field event I meet engaged couple Kate and Claire from Yorkshire. They think it's a shame more women aren't competing and the delays they're experiencing are frustrating, but they're enjoying themselves – and once Claire has won the javelin event I overhear them making plans with gay girls from around the world.

Then there's the Irish field hockey team, Pink Ladies Hockey, whose entire crowd laughingly storms the pitch when they realise the London Royals have beaten them to the gold. Equally enamoured is the Spanish female football team, De Pata Negra, who we spot dancing at the closing ceremony, proudly sporting their golden medals.

Cyd and I don't take part in the sporting events but Stockholm is a city that inspires activity. We take a guided tour of the Opera, go for a seaside run and walk almost everywhere. Getting around Stockholm is easy. The public transport has an Oyster-type system and you can even use the card on some

boats; here many commute by sea and an archipelago trip is a Stockholm must.

Another essential is LGBT favourite Mälarpaviljongen. Not only is the food served at this floating institution delicious and the setting magical; they have a political agenda and by drinking their rosé you support LGBT people in Nigeria. To top it off, Swedish lesbian icon DJ Pamela is playing on the night we visit – a real treat.

Boule och Berså, another seaside establishment, offers a relaxed atmosphere with pints and petanque, and Södra Teatern's rooftop bar, overlooking Slussen, is a stunning spot for a cheeky glass of champagne.

When we go "out out" we head to Hotellhänget, a monthly lesbian meet-up at alternating venues, before dancing the night away at Operaterasson where DJ Fride, Pamela and Gunn Lundemo are spinning records for the EuroGames Moxy takeover.

There aren't any specific lesbian bars in Stockholm, though gay clubs King Kong and Candy do welcome women. Instead I look out for nights featuring the Moxy DJs as well as Femtastic, Katja Gustavsson, Bianca Kronlöf and lesbian creative collective Malcriada. Other female-focused nights include Date, Girls Gone Wolf and Slick. Trädgården, Berns and Debaser are great "straight" alternatives.

My favourite Stockholm nighttime activity is a scenic walk. We stroll along the water past City Hall, through Old Town and on to Södermalm, where we take Götgatan towards Mosebacke beer garden. Here we're on the edge of SoFo, a relaxed neighbourhood with great restaurants, cafés, Swedish design and vintage shopping. If more international brands or high-street shopping is your thing then the area around T-Centralen and Östermäststorg, with NK, Mood Galleria and an H&M on every corner, is your destination.

Overlooking the city from Fjällgatan we see Djurgården, the nature reserve and museum island home to popular tourist attractions such as the ABBA Museum, the Vasa Museum and amusement park Gröna Lund. Just below is Fotografiska, a gallery that often puts on exhibitions with a queer spin.

Less contemporary but still worthwhile is outdoor gallery Millesgården. Here we spend an afternoon enjoying grand scale nude art, monumental

views, mouth-watering lunch and fika.

Fika means having coffee and something small to eat and I particularly enjoy doing so at gay hotspot Chokladkoppen in Old Town and traditional Vete-Katten on Kungsgatan.

More substantial vegetarian/organic eateries include Urban Deli, Paradiset, the Green Queen and Hermans, the latter offering a veggie buffet and panoramic views. A somewhat contrasting dining experience can be found at the Royal Opera, where we enjoy two minimalist dishes that taste delicious but leave us peckish.

Stockholm offers high-quality accommodation at all prices and whilst Airbnb operates here, the Stockholm Gay and Lesbian Network (gaylesbian.visitstockholm.com) also has a long online list of hotels that they recommend, including Hotel Skeppsholmen and Miss Clara. They also have a good online lesbian guide.

The EuroGames were, on the whole, a success and they will continue to be important for the purpose of promoting inclusion and combatting homophobia in sport but the organisers have a lot of thinking to do before Helsinki 2016. Personally, having discovered queer Stockholm, I leave more certain than ever that one day I'll return forever. ☺

Community spirit and fun remain the values at the heart of the EuroGames

Digital readers can click the icon to see Bella's EuroGames video. Interviews with lesbian artist Kakan Hermansson and table tennis champion Matilda Ekholt, plus more footage from Stockholm and the games can be found on Bella's YouTube channel, [youtube.com/BackstageWithBella](https://www.youtube.com/BackstageWithBella).





Spiritual Manchester

Manchester may not be the most obvious destination for those in need of spiritual healing, but who wants obvious anyway? I want to go to the hometown of Morrissey: the iconic sardonic antihero of The Smiths, animal rights and queerness! (Add some yoga and that's pretty much my kind of spirituality.) In need of some we-time, my wife and I therefore decide to head to north, and encountered a sprawling, laidback – very gay-friendly – city.

STAY

Located in the recently regenerated Salford area, the Lowry Hotel (thelowryhotel.com) overlooks the Trinity Bridge and the River Irwell. Our glass-fronted room on the top floor has spectacular views, both natural and urban: from the heron chilling by the river, via the old town buildings to the new BBC hub of MediaCity, all the way to Old Trafford. Before we've had time to examine the luxurious pared-back interiors, we're sent reeling by the friendliness of the staff. No rush, no fake "have a super day" smiles, but genuine laidback interest and a desire to tell us how proud they are of their city. For those who want to be in the heart of town, just round the corner from Manchester's Gay Village, the Radisson Blu Edwardian (radissonblu-edwardian.com) offers excellent value for money and some of the best foyer art I've ever seen. (Yes,

JOANNA
BENECKE FINDS
MIDWEEK
MANCHESTER
AN OASIS
OF CALM

there are gold llamas, and yes, the friendly concierges will take pictures of you riding said llamas.) The hotel is a sponsor of Manchester Pride, and is the perfect place for LGBTI guests. Don't miss the fabulous Sienna Spa, complete with pool, Nordic sauna and steam room.

GAY

Manchester's legendary Gay Village has a lovely, chill atmosphere when we visit on a Thursday, but apparently things go wild at weekends. From chatting to some local ladies we glean that Coyotes and Vanilla are the main lesbian clubs. Both the OM Yoga Show Manchester (omyogashow.com) and Manchester Vegan Fair (veganorganic.net/manchester-vegan-fair) prove prime lesbian-bonding territory. Perhaps spiritual fitness and cruelty-free food appeals particularly to people who get labelled "other" by the heteronormative mainstream? Whatever the reason, these types of events always have an inclusive atmosphere. The ladies in charge of the Unicorn Grocery stall at the fair direct us to their main shop, located in Chorlton, a 30-minute tram ride (tram! Awesome!) from the city centre. Easily the best supermarket I've ever been to, Unicorn Grocery Co-Operative (unicorn-grocery.coop) is like a vegan version of Wholefoods, but without the hefty price tags. Packed with shoppers, some vegan, most not,

stocking up on fresh produce, ethical beauty, eco household products and delicious cakes, the friendly staff nearly persuade us to start up our own branch down south.

PLAY

The yearly Manchester branch of the OM Yoga Show is, like basically everything Mancunian we encounter, a more relaxed, friendlier version of the London offering. The lovely Danielle Collins introduces the benefits of Face Yoga (faceyogaexpert.com); I test out a dru yoga class, which involves unique wave-like spinal flexions and is good for back problems, while my wife opts for a calming gong meditation class. The show is next to the Trafford Centre, which I had assumed would be just another shopping mall, but a brief exploration reveals an unexpectedly hilarious Dubai-meets-Vegas opulence. Faux-roman statues, faux-Grecian murals, a self-playing piano and a naked mermaid fountain are particular highlights. Back in town we head to the Buddhist Centre (manchesterbuddhistcentre.org.uk) – which offers meditation classes and a cafe serving vegan soulfood – before heading back to catch our train. Adopting a spiritual Manchester attitude, we choose not to worry about timings and stop to call the RSPCA about a pigeon with a plastic bag wrapped round its wing. It's what Morrissey would do.


WAY
Virgin Trains run
from London
to Manchester
every 20 minutes.
Journey-time is
just over two
hours.
virgintrains.co.uk

READER RECOMMENDS

OLD SMOK WINDMILL, KENT

"I took my girlfriend to this incredible romantic getaway in Kent for her birthday. We actually found it on Airbnb though it's definitely the higher end of the price scale. Totally worth it though – it's four storeys and there's a balcony, massive beams and a huge bath... Literally the most original building I've slept in, the hosts were really friendly and we both had such a peaceful, special time. I could imagine honeymooning here!"

Fiona Jayne, 35, London.

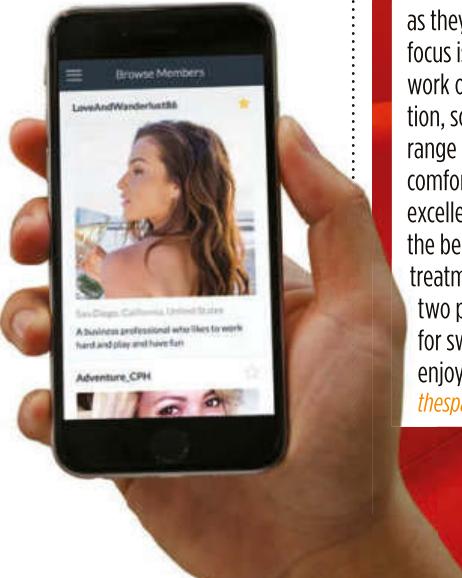
£170 per night, two nights minimum.
tinyurl.com/DIVAwindmill

TRAVEL NEWS

MISS TRAVEL

Would you travel with a complete stranger? Imagine a first date in Bali, or meeting someone new during a weekend getaway in Paris. MissTravel.com (which has 45,000 LGBT users) have just launched an app that means instead of relying on GPS locators to match you up with people when you're on holiday, now you can meet for coffee and if the chemistry is on, fly away together for a first date in a far-flung destination. Now that's what we call adventurous and romantic.

misstravel.com



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HOT HOTEL
INKATERRA

If you're looking for somewhere beautiful and exotic to head on honeymoon, the word is: Inkaterra. This South American eco tourism company puts sustainability high up on its priority list. Choose from two lodges in the Amazon (think: trekking through jungle, canopy walks, canoeing down the river), one in the cloud forests of Machu Picchu, one in Cusco and another recently-opened property in the Urubamba Valley, where there's an emphasis on traditional farming. inkaterra.com

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When he delivers the car to my home, Paul from Infiniti asks me what I usually drive. "A bicycle," I laugh. The last car I drove was the Ford Ka I got from the car hire place down the road when my girl and I fancied a day-trip to Margate.

The car in front of me is the Infiniti Q60 convertible, made by the luxury arm of Nissan – as Lexus is to Toyota, or so my auto aficionado pals tell me. Paul introduces me to my new toy by virtue of the Infiniti intelligent key, a "key-less key" that personalises your car without taking it out of your pocket. Once you've pressed the switch on the door handle, the seat, outside mirrors, windows and steering wheel automatically set to your preferences.

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I'd never been that impressed by those kind of numbers until I had to cross a hair-pin right turn through a stream of speeding cars. Knowing that the car houses six airbags, a tyre pres-

sure monitoring system, four-wheel active steering, pop-up protection bars and 19-inch alloy wheels was also reassuring, especially so when I cruised along the winding coastal route to Eastbourne's Beachy Head. There's nothing quite like knowing and feeling that the car you're driving can grip the road. How to better this driving experience? With its seven-speaker Bose sound system, you won't miss a beat of your favourite sing-along tracks, even with the top down.

Inside the car there's really nothing more you could wish for: in-built sat-nav as standard, with options for fastest or most economical routes and suggestions for local restaurants and the option to call them directly from the console, parking sensors (including aerial as well as rear and front views), leather seats and a "forest air" air-con option that pumps everything except the droppings of woodland creatures gently into your cockpit.

Finally and perhaps most crucially for those who want to make the most of the summer days, the Repo Man-style roof retractor turns the car from a stylish winter coupe to a summer show-stopper in an impressive 25 seconds. The only downsides for me are the small boot capacity, the price (from £45K means I'm resigned

to revive my second-to-none Infiniti convertible driving experience only in my dreams), thirsty V6 petrol engine (approximately 24.8 mpg combined urban and extra-urban) and the relatively high CO₂ emission rating (264g/km compared to the UK average of 138g/km). That said, if you want a unique car that is hugely popular in Japan and the US and as yet relatively rare in the UK and Europe, with a dealership that is streets ahead, literally, of other brands (you can find showrooms in London's Westfield centres), you won't be disappointed.

I've test-driven a fair few cars in my time, top-end as well as mid-range and budget, and I can honestly say I've never received better customer service. Additionally – and this kind of thing means a lot to me – Brendan Norman and his team explained the features of the car in a way that didn't feel as if I was being talked down to in a blokey Top Gear way, a trait that is sadly too common among less forward-thinking car dealers.

For those who prefer a more solid roof and a bigger driving experience altogether, the Q70 saloon is a slick beast of a car that runs on diesel and is therefore more economical than the convertible – clocking up an impressive 57.6 mpg combined urban and extra-urban use – and its environmental credentials are commendable at 129g/km (that's close to 10g/km below that average new UK petrol guzzler). At four cylinders instead of the six in the convertible, the Q70 still packs a punch and accelerates from 0 to 60 in 8.2 seconds.

With cockpit features that are broadly similar to the Q60, where the saloon excels is additional features such as cruise control and break assist, blind-spot and lane departure warning and prevention systems which are a massive boon whether you're driving on B roads or motorways. Still pricey at £33,400, the Q70 is the kind of car you might want to encourage your boss to add to the company fleet. All this and the 74-litre boot (perfect for those who travel with more than the capsule wardrobe you'll take with you in the convertible) make the saloon the ultimate choice for a unique and classy luxury motor. **D**

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Jesse (right) and business partner Kat; (above left) Jesse and her two mums, Peta and Sandi, with her younger siblings



Memories are made of this

I am a 26-year-old, photographer and author, I love camping and Asian food. Last but not least, I have two mums.

This statement does not seem as shocking as it was 30 years ago when my parents decided they wanted to have children. They were at the forefront of same-sex parenting in the late 80s. They knew no one gay or lesbian who had had babies. It seems unnecessary now, but my mum would not leave the house with me when I was first born because she feared social services would take me away. But the world is changing and people are becoming more accepting.

I have grown up with women loving women my whole life, so this concept has never been strange to me. In terms of our family dynamic, my parents were my two mums. I had a dad. He was more of an uncle figure to me. He was my mums' best friend and he helped them make our family through sperm donation. He lived in the next town over with his wife and my half brothers and sisters, but he had no parental control over my siblings and I. We all met up for Sunday lunches and went on big holidays together. But within me there was never a longing for anything different. I had all the parents that I needed.

When we were growing up we were

JESSE TOKSVIG-STEWART TELLS THE STORY BEHIND A NEW MEMORY BOOK MADE FOR ALL SORTS OF FAMILIES

the only family like ours that I knew. We were surrounded by my mums' lesbian and gay friends but our family was unique. When we were growing up, my parents surrounded themselves with parents and families that were accepting, even though they were mostly conventional family set-ups. People can be conventional in a family dynamic but unconventional in their parenting or interests. I don't remember feeling like I was the odd one out, surrounded by all of these mummies and daddies. I guess, as a child you don't tend to want something different if you are completely content and loved. There were no gender-assigned roles and we were encouraged by both parents to be whoever we wanted to be. My mothers have co-parented my brother and sister and me brilliantly, with love and devotion our whole lives, even after they split up.

Our family has grown, with new family members, and developed into this weird and wonderful unit that we never could have predicted. One of my mums has a new partner now, with a child from a previous relationship. My other mum has adopted my littlest sister, who is about to turn three. When she adopted, I wanted to get her a record book. The problem was that there were no memory books that did

I decided it was time there was a memory book for families like mine

not include very specific elements of the nuclear family set-up. Looking back at my own record book, my parents had to cross out "Daddy" to put "Mama". Twenty-six years hadn't made any difference at all.

I decided it was time there was a memory book for unconventional families, too.

I asked my friend Kat to illustrate the book and together we created *My Amazing Family And Me*. It is designed for alternative families and does not specify the age of a child, nor the gender and status of the grown-ups in their life. Our book is accessible for couples and single parents, same-sex or straight, birth children or adopted.

Our aim was to create a product that spoke to as many different families as possible. Our headings are simple and allow people to document their families in whichever way they want to. Adoptive parents may not have had the joy of spending their child's first birthday together, but the heading *My First Birthday At Home* does not alienate. It is the child's first birthday at home with their parents, even if it is not their first birthday.

We did not want any family to be left out of the wonderful rite of passage that a memory book is. Our book makes unconventional families feel included and it brings to people's attention that there is more than one way to make an amazing family. 

Jesse Toksvig-Stewart is a photographer living in Surrey and is co-author with friend Kat Willott of *My Amazing Family And Me*, which is available to purchase at uglyduckbooks.co.uk, priced £15.99.

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How to create a bloody amazing (Sex) life

There are a few days every month when my wife knows not to touch my nipples. I tell her in no uncertain terms: "Don't touch me! I'm way too sensitive and sore!" There are also a few days every month when I tell her something different: "I'm horny... I'm really in the mood... I want you to fuck me (please)." These days don't happen randomly, they follow a pattern. And the pattern is pretty much dictated by where I am in my menstrual cycle.

The trouble is, my wife has her own menstrual pattern: days when she tears up at the Cat's Protection adverts, and days when every kiss turns passionate. The trick seems to

ANNA
SANSON
TALKED WITH
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MAVEN LISA
LISTER ABOUT
USING OUR
PERIODS TO
CREATE AN
AMAZING LIFE

be getting the horny and the passionate days to coincide.

We've recently started charting our periods: how we each feel and behave at different times in our cycles. It will take a few months to start to see the patterns (where we meet, and when we are at completely different places in our moods and desires), but it is already proving to be an interesting method of self inquiry.

Lots of questions arise: when am I at my most outgoing and gregarious? When do I want to shut myself off from the world and eat chocolate? When do I feel eloquent and best able to express myself? When do I feel I could climb a mountain? And when do I just want to stay in bed?

I appreciate that the intricacies of my menstrual cycle are unlikely to be of any interest to the readers of

this article. But I think I have another question that many of us will relate to: what does all this mean for the sex lives of women in relationship with women? How can unlocking the secrets of our periods help us have better relationships and better sex?

I put these questions to menstrual maven Lisa Lister, author of the book *Code Red: Know Your Flow, Unlock Your Monthly Super Powers And Create A Bloody Amazing Life*. Period.

One of the many things I love about Lisa and her dedication to helping women "create a bloody amazing life", is her inclusiveness. Before we even get to the contents page in *Code Red*, she writes: "I'm aware that not all women menstruate and not all people who menstruate are women, and I welcome a space for opening up the conversation for all people who

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menstruate, regardless of gender identity." Her work is also applicable to those post-menopause, and she thoughtfully uses the pronouns "they/them" throughout the book to refer to any partner the reader may have. It's also worth noting that this book is primarily a tool for self-exploration and discovery. It's not a relationship manual, but knowing more about what makes each of us tick will invariably help in any relationships we have (sexual or otherwise).

The basic premise behind *Code Red* is that our monthly cycles follow four main "seasons". Much like the calendar year, every month we go through our own spring (pre-ovulation), summer (ovulation), autumn (pre-menstruation) and winter (menstruation). How we think and feel varies from season to season. By understanding and honouring these different seasons, we can tap into our "super powers" and live in sync with our cyclical natures rather than trying to ignore or avoid them, or trying to force ourselves into a linear way of being: "like a dude".

The first step is to understand your own cycle: explore and discover your unique "lady landscape" using the tools of self-discovery outlined in *Code Red*. Then opportunity for another layer of understanding opens up: if I know this about myself, what can I find out about my partner? What does this mean in terms of how we relate to each other and how we have sex?

"If you are on day seven of your cycle and coming into new, spring-like energy you'll likely be willing to stretch out and want to try something new," Lisa explains. "You'll be feeling fresh energy and it will feel good. If your partner is on day 22/23, for example, they would be in the pre-menstrual phase, they would need a lot of slowness, and it would need to be more tender. The day seven person would be really happy for a quickie, to go and explore, and do something daring and new. Whereas the other partner would need more attention and it would take longer for her to cli-

max. The day seven person would be ready, they'd be juicy, they'd be done, and ready to go again in the time it will take the day 23 person to even reach orgasm in the first place. The day seven person might say, 'Come on, let's have some fun,' while the day 23 person says, 'I just want to be touched, I just want to be caressed'. There's an opportunity here for negotiation using this knowledge."

In other words, good communication and appreciation of where your partner is at can help lead to good sex. Of course, regardless of what's happening in a menstrual cycle, things happen in our lives that can impact on our sex lives. You can't always know how your partner is feeling or what they want, so the more information you have – and can share with one another – the easier it becomes to navigate. This means owning what's going on for you as individuals, being willing to share, and feeling empowered to share more than just, "Oh it's my time of the month..."

Lisa continues, "In my friendship circle we share 'I'm day XX and I'm showing up like this'. I love that that's an ok conversation to be having. It's a deep understanding of ourselves. In women-women relationships, if we have that understanding and appreciation of how our bodies are cycling, we can show up better for ourselves and have respect for the person we're with. Having that understanding is an essential tool to understanding our relationship."

Perhaps this is another example where we can bust the myth that "another woman just knows" – especially when it comes to how lesbians like to have sex. We are all individuals and we all have our preferences and, unless you can communicate that, you can't assume that anyone will "just know". In other words, how I experience day 23 may be different to how my partner experiences it. There may be similarities but how that is expressed within us could be different.

Lisa agrees. "If you are charting [your period] and after a few months you see that on day 23 you burst into

tears or are super emotional, and day 23 comes for your partner and you assume that's how they are going to be, that's a massive assumption. In writing the book I reiterated that these are brush strokes: this is what day 11 could look like but it may be completely different for you. That's why different people love different parts of their cycle. I'm a hermit by nature so I love that pre-menstrual phase when I almost have a permission slip to come into myself and do some 'me' work without the guilt and the shame of 'slowing down makes me weak' and all that kind of stuff."

There are some great personal examples in *Code Red* of how understanding her cycle helps Lisa and her husband to navigate their own relationship, and the "Hot Viking" (AKA Richard) has even contributed a chapter of his own to offer a partner's perspective. Lisa has welcomed questions from women in lesbian relationships: Will it mean double the drama? Will our bleeds naturally cycle together? What happens if we are both on day 25 when we can feel short tempered and quick to speak our truth? "I don't know the answers and I'd like to explore more", Lisa tells me. "This is new territory for me to investigate and I'm excited that women want to use this tool for self-exploration."

So here's my challenge for those of us in women-women relationships: let's get to know our cycles, to understand those of our female partners too, and not only unlock our monthly super-powers but use this knowledge to create amazing sex lives too. Period. ☺



BUY THE BOOK

CODE RED by Lisa Lister is published by SHE Press. Available on Amazon in paperback and Kindle versions.



MAYBE MORE

SINCERE, LOVING, THOUGHTFUL

F, 61, passionate about plants & gardens, enjoys walking, dogs/cats, cooking & quiet times. Seeks similar F for LTR. S Ldn. Box 379461

✉ DV 379461

QUITE BOYISH

F, 47, 5'6", likes to talk, not into the scene, into complimentary therapies & days out. WLTM F for f/ship, maybe more. Bradford. Box 909633

✉ DV 909633

FEMININE

F, 51, enjoys most things including cinema & meals. WLTM nice, genuine F & hopefully that someone special.

Gloucs. Box 975380 ✉ DV 975380

SLIM, BLACK-HAIRED

Brown-eyed F, 21, very close to her family. WLTM genuine, kind, nice, adventurous F. Mancs. Box 281994

YOUNG, ATTRACTIVE

Sexy F, 28. WLTM nice, free, understanding F who is there for me 7 days a week. No jealous-minded people. W Yorks. Box 145536

THOUGHTS BECOME THINGS

Honest & caring F, 47, boyish, seeks feminine F. Come see the world with me. Clywd. Box 196176 ✉ DV 196176

MEET, CHAT & HAVE FUN

Genuine, sincere F, 64. WLTM F, 60-65, for fun, outings & possibly more. Leeds. Box 443431 ✉ DV 443431

FLOWER IN SUMMER

F, 50, likes the garden. Seeks F, similar age. If you are interested, I would like to meet you. W Yorks. Box 662908

FUN & FLIRTATION

F, 51, likes gardening, cinema & all the general things. WLTM F to flirt with and get to know a bit better.

Mersey-e. Box 785411

LOYAL, THOUGHTFUL

Gay F, 59, smoker, seeks affectionate, feminine gay lady, 45+, for girlfriend, fun & much more. Notts. Box 995264

✉ DV 995264

OUTDOORS PERSON

F, 53, 5'2", WLTM F, similar area & age, who enjoys meals out, movies & theatre, for f/ship & to see what happens. S Ldn. Box 408924

✉ DV 408924

SINCERE, GAY

F, 36, seeks gay F for f/ship, nights out, meals out, etc. Rhyl. Box 163669

VERY OUTGOING

F, 40s, slim, 5'6", red hair, blue eyes, WLTM F for fun times, maybe more. Swansea. Box 757493

RETIRING, PROFESSIONAL

Blonde, blue-eyed F, 60, 5'6", lots of interests & brilliant SOH, WLTM F as companion, friend or for f/ship. Cheshire. Box 245555

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MAYBE MORE

Outgoing F, 35, medium build, loves life, seeking F of any age for fun, maybe more. Lancs/Merseyside. Box 945612 ✉ DV 945612

SLIM, WITTY

F, 49, blue eyes, attractive, 5'6", genuine, likes theatre, dinner, conversation & sports. WLTM F to laugh & click with. Essex. Box 157818 ✉ DV 157818

A GREAT NIGHT OUT

F, 31, enjoys travel, cinema, playing pool & bowling, looking for like-minded F for f/ship. Cardiff/Bridgend. Box 572639

FRIENDLY, HONEST

F, 24, student, seeks F for f/ship & intimacy. Cardiff. Box 597921

AFFECTIONATE, CARING, POSITIVE

F, 50s, SOH & integrity, loves countryside, animals. WLTM fem F, 50s, to share love & happiness on life's exciting journey. Surrey. Box 178830

PERFECT DAY WITH YOU

Stylish, fem black F, 43, looking for non-scene F companion. Essex. Box 150999 ✉ DV 150999

SPIRITUAL, SINCERE

F, 38, single mum, likes travel & writing. Seeks F for coffee, chats, possibly intimacy & more. Co. Down. Box 861404 ✉ DV 861404

SINCERE, QUIET

F, 61, GSoh, has two dogs, seeks F for good f/ship & further. Omagh/Co. Tyrone. Box 660622 ✉ DV 660622

HONEST, LOYAL, CARING

F, 62, n/s, large build, enjoys walks, the film & WLTM F, 60+, for a forever f/ship. Kent. Box 704273

FEMININE, YOUTHFUL

F, 51, GSoh, thoughtful, n/s, has ME, likes animals & mystery. Seeks understanding, caring F, 38-55, for laughs+. L'pool. Box 913989

POSITIVE, OUTGOING, PROFESS

F, 51, seeks F for dancing in the kitchen, dog walks on the beach, good food, laughter & romance. Newcastle. Box 436275

SINGLE LESBIAN

In her 30s seeks British/Asian or mixed-race single bi/lesbian girlfriend, 19-40. Coventry, B'ham & W. Mids. Box 952234 ✉ DV 952234

ENJOYS LIFE

F, 35, enjoys days out, pubs & clubs. WLTM honest F, any age, for f/ship. Mancs. Box 445432 ✉ DV 445432

THROUGH THE MIST

Attractive F, 52, 5'5", hazel eyes, seeks F for f/ship & r/ship. Glocs. Box 145226

BIG & BEAUTIFUL

F, 49, big heart, fun, seeks F to be her soulmate. B'ham. Box 400696

HONEST, CARING

Kind, loving F, 62, n/s, likes cinema, theatre, walks, dogs & nature. WLTM F with similar interests, for LTR. Kent. Box 112412 ✉ DV 112412

KIND, SENSITIVE

F, 46, likes meals out, cinema, shopping & the seaside. Seeks caring, honest, reliable F for f/ship & r/ship. Essex. Box 609985 ✉ DV 609985

CUDDLY, BUBBLY

F, 44, 5'7", loving, with big heart. Seeks similar, honest, kind F. W Mids. Box 874664

CONTACT ME

Butch F, 54. Enjoys walks in the country, meals out, poetry & theatre. Seeks like-minded F. Mancs. Box 515033 ✉ DV 515033

ATTRACTIVE, FEMININE

F, 52, but not into dresses & skirts. Seeks similar F, for nice meals & coffee. Glocs. Box 298545

GOOD-LOOKING

Mixed-race F, late 30s, passionate, honest & caring. Seeks feminine, gay F for f/ship, maybe r/ship. Stoke-on-Trent. Box 196228 ✉ DV 196228

LOVING, CARING

Sincere, faithful F, 62. Enjoys music, walking & the beach. Seeks F partner with similar interests, Kent. Box 537564 ✉ DV 537564

BOYISH SINGLE PARENT

F, 52, enjoys the gym, fishing, pool, nights in/out, seeks honest F, similar age, for f/ship, maybe more. Swindon. Box 271087 ✉ DV 271087

AMIABLE, HONEST

F, 45, seeks genuine F for good f/ship & r/ship. Slough. Box 188074

BABYFACE FEMALE

Lonely F, 37, seeks mixed race F for good lasting f/ship & shared future. Coventry. Box 100798 ✉ DV 100798

DEEP, PASSIONATE

F, 54, seeks stimulating F with something to say for conversation & more. SE Ldn/anywhere. Box 269592

SINCERE, LOVING

F, 46, likes animals, seeks F, 40+, for loving r/ship. Herts. Box 934884

LOVELY

F, 27, seeks similar F for f/ship, fun & more. Wrexham. Box 620424

CREATIVE, OUTGOING, FUN

F, 30, staffie owner, loves DJing, clubbing, singing, drawing & socialising. WLTM loyal, mixed-race gay F for r/ship. Cov. Box 783205 ✉ DV 783205

LOVING, CARING, GAY

F, 52, likes meals out, cinema & walks. Seeks caring, loving F for r/ship. Lancs. Box 757299 ✉ DV 757299

HONEST, SENSUAL

F, 63, 5'8", medium build, seeks similar F for good r/ship. Ldn. Box 584603

FRIENDLY, KIND

F, 52, 5'5", medium build, seeks similar F for mutual happiness & contentment. Mancs. Box 792911 ✉ DV 792911

FRIENDLY, OUTGOING

F, 66, likes holidays, animals & meals out. Seeks nice F, 65-72, to meet up with & have a chat. Oldham. Box 438505

FOOTSTEPS ON THE DANCEFLOOR

F, 57, 5'3", dark hair, likes car boots, reading, holidays & socialising. Seeks F for f/ship, r/ship. Mancs. Box 537565 ✉ DV 537565

QUIET, SINCERE

F, 23, likes a few drinks out, seeks lovely F for fun times & a reason to be. Ayrs. Box 357879

SINCERE, HAPPY

F, 50s, likes gardens & travel. Seeks nice F for something intimate. Belfast. Box 372189

AFFECTIONATE, CARING

F, 51, seeks genuine, similar F for f/ship & maybe more. Belfast. Box 357756 ✉ DV 357756

LOVING, LOYAL, FAITHFUL

F, 42, n/s, enjoys all the good things in life, seeks F, 36-48, for f/ship, fun times & maybe more. Devon. Box 868555 ✉ DV 868555

GROUNDED, GENUINE

F, 38, seeks F who is kind to strangers & keen to share their best memories with someone special. London. Box 223704 ✉ DV 223704

COSY NIGHTS IN

Sincere F, 62, medium build, likes animals, walks & some reading. Seeks n/s F for f/ship & good r/ship. Warwick. Box 733509 ✉ DV 733509

LOUD, PROUD, CONFIDENT

F, 40, bubbly, likes dance & films. Seeks F for wild nights out & passionate nights in. Milton Keynes. Box 273975

FUN, TOMBOY

F, 36, likes football, cinema & nights out. Seeks feminine F, 30-40, for r/ship. Mancs. Box 798661 ✉ DV 798661

KIND, CARING

F, 45, likes cats, seeks F for loving r/ship. Stockport. Box 442022

VERY OUTGOING

F, 55, loves travel & the outdoors. Seeks gentle, feminine F, similar age, for great, loving r/ship. Devon. Box 527387 ✉ DV 527387

LOVES HAVING A LAUGH

F, 44, loves socialising, seeks F for fun, f/ship & hopefully r/ship. Mancs. Box 588840 ✉ DV 588840

SEEKING MS RIGHT

Single, bi F, 57, attractive & full figured. Seeks F, similar age, for fun times. Cotswolds. Box 283751 ✉ DV 283751

BI-CURIOUS BUXOM

F, 52, size 18, seeks bisexual, or curious F, 50-65, for f/ship & fun times. Hull. Box 417395 ✉ DV 417395

HONEST, FUN

F, 43, likes socialising & lots of laughter. Seeks F for great r/ship. Mancs. Box 741884

GENUINE, FUN-LOVING

F, 52, likes cinema, nights in & out. Seeks F for fun times & possible r/ship. Mancs. Box 523480

100% GAY

F, 54, seeks solvent, gay F for good laughs & r/ship. Mancs. Box 870496

HAPPY-GO-LUCKY

F, 53, slim build, WLTM F for f/ship, hopefully leading to LTR. W. Yorks. Box 41452

NO STRINGS

MUSIC TO MY EARS

F, 35, easy-going, loves life & likes music. WLTM F, local area, for sexy fun & f/ship. Merseyside Box 113991

✉ DV 113991

ATTRACTIVE, BISEXUAL

F, 60s, has a partner, seeks similar, bisexual lady for adult fun & f/ship. N. Surrey/Midx. Box 812077

FEMALES RULE!

F, 22, seeks F for great times. B'ham. Box 556726

JUST FRIENDS

HONEST, FRIENDLY

F couple, 46, love music & meals out. Seeks like-minded F friends for nights out in Glasgow. Box 282737

✉ DV 282737

CONVERSATION & LAUGHS

Sincere F, 44, into food, cinema & drinks. Looking to put a group together of like minded F's, 35-55, for f/ship. Sheffield. Box 210859

✉ DV 210859

LIFE BEGINS...

Animal-loving F, 33, seeks friends for socialising, laughter, intelligent conversation & a little bit of mischief. Somerset. Box 757543 ✉ DV 757543

SINCERE, TRUSTING

F, 48, likes the outdoors & learning Spanish. Seeks F for chats & genuine f/ship. Ldn. Box 359170

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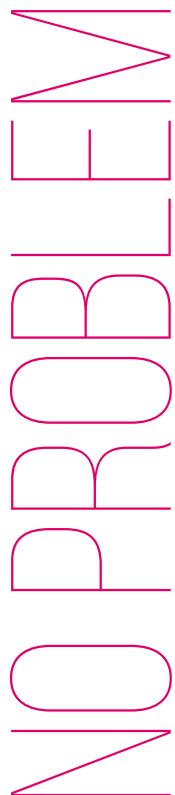
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READERS' REPLIES

Let me start by saying I also cut myself for years. Started around the same as you did and stopped around 19ish. It was also a coping mechanism although I guess I didn't understand that at the time. Whoever you end up being with, the scars won't bother them because it's part of you. And if it does bother them, it's not the right person for you. So for now, when you feel the urge to cut, distract yourself. Do something else because cutting isn't the answer. Take it from one who has been there and got the scars to prove it. It will get better and you will stop doing it. Be strong.

K Lang

PHOTO HOLLY FALCONER



IF YOU'VE
GOT ISSUES,
WE CAN HELP

I WANT TO STOP CUTTING MYSELF

Hi Jane,
I've got a problem that I'm very ashamed of and I haven't told anyone about. It involves me being very secretive and covering certain parts of my body all the time. I cut myself. I've been doing it since I was 12 when my dad left my mum and now I'm 18 and I'm thinking of leaving home, maybe to get a job, so I can be more independent, or maybe to go travelling so I can get away from all this and find people who I feel I can relate to and who might understand me but I really want to stop cutting because although it makes me feel like I can cope better with things I know it's not a good idea to carry on. Plus my skin is really hurting and it doesn't look great. I'm too embarrassed to even think about sex and girlfriends because I don't know how to tell someone about this. It would be nice though to feel that I had someone to talk to. I like DIVA because it helps me to feel more connected with that part of myself because I can't do it in real life if that makes sense. Hope you can help.

DL

Dear DL,
Thanks for your email. I read it and felt really sad that you're ashamed of the cutting and your scars. If you're like most people who self-harm in this way, cutting – although almost counter-intuitive – often feels like it's the most effective way to release the pain,

I was with a woman for a while who had self-harmed in the past and still did on occasion; her arms were littered with scars. For me (someone who has no experience of this), I looked at it in the same way as smoking/drinking/overeating/taking drugs. Different people deal with life's stresses in different ways. What is important is that you don't hide yourself or who you are (easier said than done, I know). As the saying goes, "The people who mind don't matter, and the people who matter don't mind". Your scars are not who you are, they don't define you, they are just a piece in the entire puzzle that makes you who you are.

Hayley Cooper

shame, rage and other deep feelings, but hiding who you are and what you feel is an added burden.

I'm wondering what it is that you are ashamed of? There's no shame in feeling things like rage, sadness or abandonment, although often we can feel that we are to blame for having these feelings in the first place.

I'm glad you've had the courage to write to me, though. Getting it out in the open is the first step to stopping. I hope the next person you tell, whether it's a close friend or family member, a counsellor or even your local GP (who can help you to find free or low-cost counselling if you decide that's what you'd like to do) will be able to offer you the support you need to stop.

In the meantime, there are quite a few online resources aimed at helping people to understand why they cut, when is the right time to stop, how it can be reduced, what you can learn to do in place of cutting. There's a really good resource at scar-tissue.net/stopping.html, which I hope you'll find helpful.

If you'd like to speak to someone, Mind infoline has information on self-harm. Just call them on 0300 123 3393. You mentioned that you want to get away from where you live now and I don't know what your reasons are for this but I wonder if now that you've started to be more open about cutting there might be someone you know who understands you more than you think? You sound doubtful about this and there are some unhelpful stereotypes about cutting and people who do it but you may be surprised to find that someone you know "gets it" and wants to help you.

Lastly, don't assume that all lesbians or bi women will react badly if they find out you cut. Some may but others may empathise and support you. If they do react badly, then they're really not worth sticking with.

jane

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- STOCKHOLM'S EUROGAMES PRESENTED BY BELLA QVIST
- SENSE8'S DOONA BAE IN A GIRL AT MY DOOR
- ONCE UPON A TIME QUEER BAITING VIDEO MASHUP
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on the cover price!

AVAILABLE ON



If, like me, you have been on holiday recently and if, like me, you used your phone whilst abroad, you might be waiting in dread for the phone bill to arrive. Sending it in email format rather than having it land on the mat doesn't make it any better, does it?

I, on the other hand, am sitting here smugly writing my column with a lovely tan because I know exactly what my bill will be, and it's not too bad. Here's how I managed that, in three easy steps...

Rhoda Meek is an IT consultant and designer with a social media addiction, a crochet habit, a RaspberryPi and two left feet.
wodieskodie.com
@wodieskodie

WHAT'S
YOUR CURRENT
GEEKY OBSESSION?
LET ME KNOW!
GEEK@DIVAMAG.
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LESBIAN EMOJIS

Check out the inspired lesbian emojis by Kimberley Linn, a lesbian and art director living in LA. They rock. I need them in my life. Which is fortunate, because they are now available as an app in iTunes called Lesbian Emojis :-D
instagram.com/lesbianemojis



APPY HOLIDAYS!
 1. DO YOUR RESEARCH
 2. GET YOUR APPS IN ORDER
 3. BE SAVVY

APPY HOLIDAYS!

RESIDENT GEEK RHODA MEEK EXPLAINS HOW TO AVOID A WORLD OF ROAMING CHARGE PAIN



1 DO YOUR RESEARCH

Phone companies are beginning to realise that rather than having their customers so frightened of a phone bill that they switch their phone off for the duration of a holiday, it might be better to make a simpler way of doing things. Most companies now offer a flat rate for roaming so that for, say, £3 per day, you can use all your usual calls and data. I went to the States, so I paid £5 a day, but only on days I actually used my phone. It was really handy when I absolutely needed to use a navigation app. I just budgeted £5 for that day. It ran from midnight to midnight. Just remember to switch the mobile data off again before you go to sleep...

2 GET YOUR APPS IN ORDER

There are apps out there to make life easier. O2 for example have the TU Go app. This brilliant bit of tech lets you route all text messages and texts over wifi. That way, as long as you are on wifi, you can text and make calls without any roaming fees. Three and EE have similar systems, working either in the background or in app form.
wo2.co.uk/apps/tu-go

Boingo is a handy app for connecting you to free wifi spots. Boingo Wi-Finder helps find thousands of free wifi and Boingo hotspots worldwide. The app will also automatically notify you of and connect you to free hotspots, so getting online is a breeze. You do need to sign up for an account, and if you want their fast wifi spots, you pay on a monthly basis, but it should work out cheaper than a world of roaming charge pain.
boingo.com/retail

3 BE SAVVY

If you are in a café with free wifi, remember that by going to "my places" on Google Maps, and scrolling all the way to the bottom, you can save maps to use offline. On my trip, a saved map covered all of Manhattan, allowing me to have a map permanently in my pocket that cost me nothing.

Top tip, though: on free wifi, never log in to anything sensitive, like online banking. The wifi is free, it may even be fast, but it is highly unlikely to be secure.



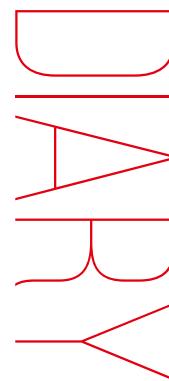
2-4.10

EQUAL FEST

The Unicorn, London

Equal Fest is a festival with the astonishingly simple belief in equal rights. Star turns from Screaming Toenail, Big Joanie and others. All bands/performers have at least one woman/trans/non-binary member.

tinyurl.com/DIVAEQualFest



UNTIL 24.10

BLUE VELVET

Lyric Hammersmith, London

At last! A stage adaptation of Sarah Waters' watershed literary achievement *Tipping The Velvet*, otherwise known as that book that made you gay.

lyric.co.uk

24-27.09

BIT SQUIFFY

CCA, Glasgow

SQIFF will screen over 30 features, documentaries and shorts and hold dozens of workshops and parties. All events are free for people who are unemployed and for refugees and asylum seekers. Workshops are free for everyone!

sqiff.org

**SO IT'S
CHILLY OUT,
BUT LONGER
NIGHTS MEAN
MORE TIME
TO PAAARTY**

24.09

DYKE HARD

CCA, Glasgow

A failed lesbian rock group try to revive their fortunes by travelling to a Battle of the Bands competition in the big city. Film premier followed by Q&A with the director Bitte Anderson.

tinyurl.com/DIVADykeHard

25.09

BI THE WAY

Goldsmiths, London

An evening asking the big questions about bisexuality. How might bi women organise and foster better communication between divergent arenas in the LGBT community? Lets wave bi to bi prejudice!

tinyurl.com/DIVABiBi

**WHAT'S
HAP-
PENING
WHERE
YOU
ARE?**

Send your listings to
dora@divamag.co.uk

For weekly listings,
visit divamag.co.uk

26.09

GET PAPER

Marquis of Lansdowne, London

The queer goddesses behind lez night Aphrodyki are busy earning! Make it rain to songs about £££. Screw the pay gap.

tinyurl.com/DIVAAphrodyki

26.09**OPERATION OPP***93 Feet East, London*

OPP (Other People's Property) ran the game back when lez nights were just a twinkle in east London's eye, now they are the whole glittering iris! OPP return with her crew to show you how its done...

tinyurl.com/DIVAOpp**27.09****GET REAL!***Prince Charles Cinema, London*

Ring the alarm, it's September and school is in session. See Get Real, a film based on the much maligned but pretty rad 90s play *What's Wrong With Angry?* This special screening telescopes in on queer visibility in the education system.

tinyurl.com/DIVAGetReal**UNTIL 18.10****GO GETA!***Tate Liverpool, Liverpool*

I don't know who the curators are at Tate Liverpool are, but you rock! Another startling introduction to a female trailblazer you never knew you loved. This time it's the turn of Romanian artist Geta Brătescu whose practice straddles performance, textile work, paper collage and film.

tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool**29.09****SHE'S GOT HER TICKET***Waterstone's Piccadilly, London*

Back for the second year, bigger and better! The Gay Travel Fair gives jet-setting gays the chance to discover the best holiday and travel ideas as well as network with other gay professionals. It's a big old world out there!

gaytravelfair2015.eventbrite.co.uk**7.10****PREACH!***BHASVIC, Brighton*

GLOWchoir Brighton is a Natural Voice Community Choir for LGBTQ people and allies to come together in song. Every Wednesday, tea and sympathy provided!

tinyurl.com/DIVAGlowOct**31.10****WORDSMITH***Roundhouse, London*

Jesus died for somebody's sins but not Patti Smith's. She'll be horsing around, to the delight of punk ass kids of all ages.

roundhouse.org.uk**UNTIL 8.10****HIGH DRAMA***Touring the UK*

It's 1915 and Dorothy Lawrence, a young journalist with aspirations to become a war correspondent, takes to her bicycle to join the frontline in France. What happens next rocks the powers that be and shakes her life apart. This new play, *The Disappearance Of Dorothy Lawrence*, written by Julie McNamara, explores how society has historically reacted to its woman rebels.

vitalxposure.co.uk**31.10****FANGS VERY MUCH***Brixton Ritzy, London*

Halloween celebration of the (actually super queer!) TV show, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Buffy gave us happy lesbian couple Willow and Tara (pictured) and didn't shy from portraying interspecies sex or rooting for the outsider. Big up Joss Whedon!

tinyurl.com/DIVABuffy**6.10****OOH GIRL***The Green Door Store, Brighton*

Ain't nothin' but a grrrl thing. Club night dedicated to the queer, the feminist and the plain great! FemRock Brighton present an autumnal edition of their infamous punk night. All-female DJs as standard.

@FemRockBrighton

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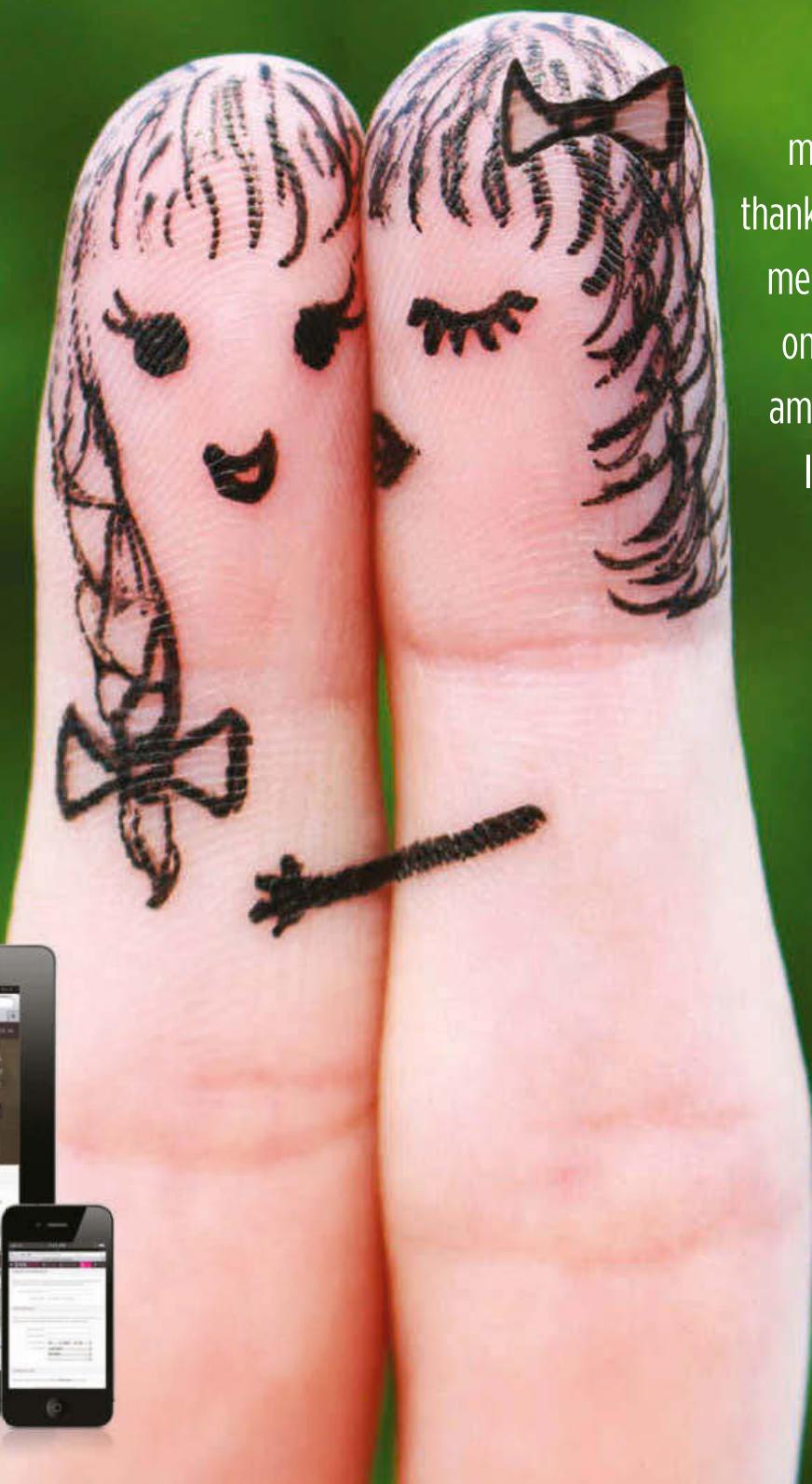
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